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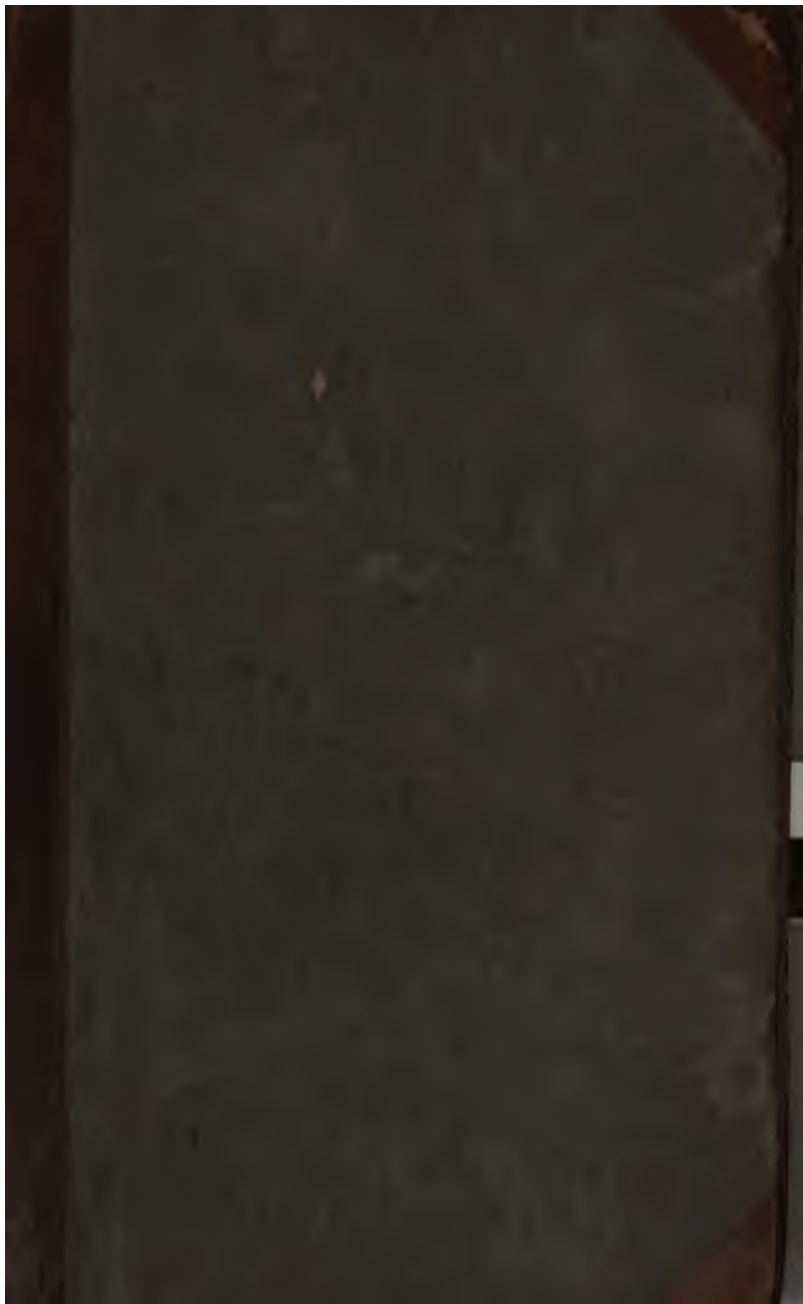
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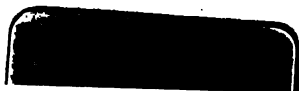
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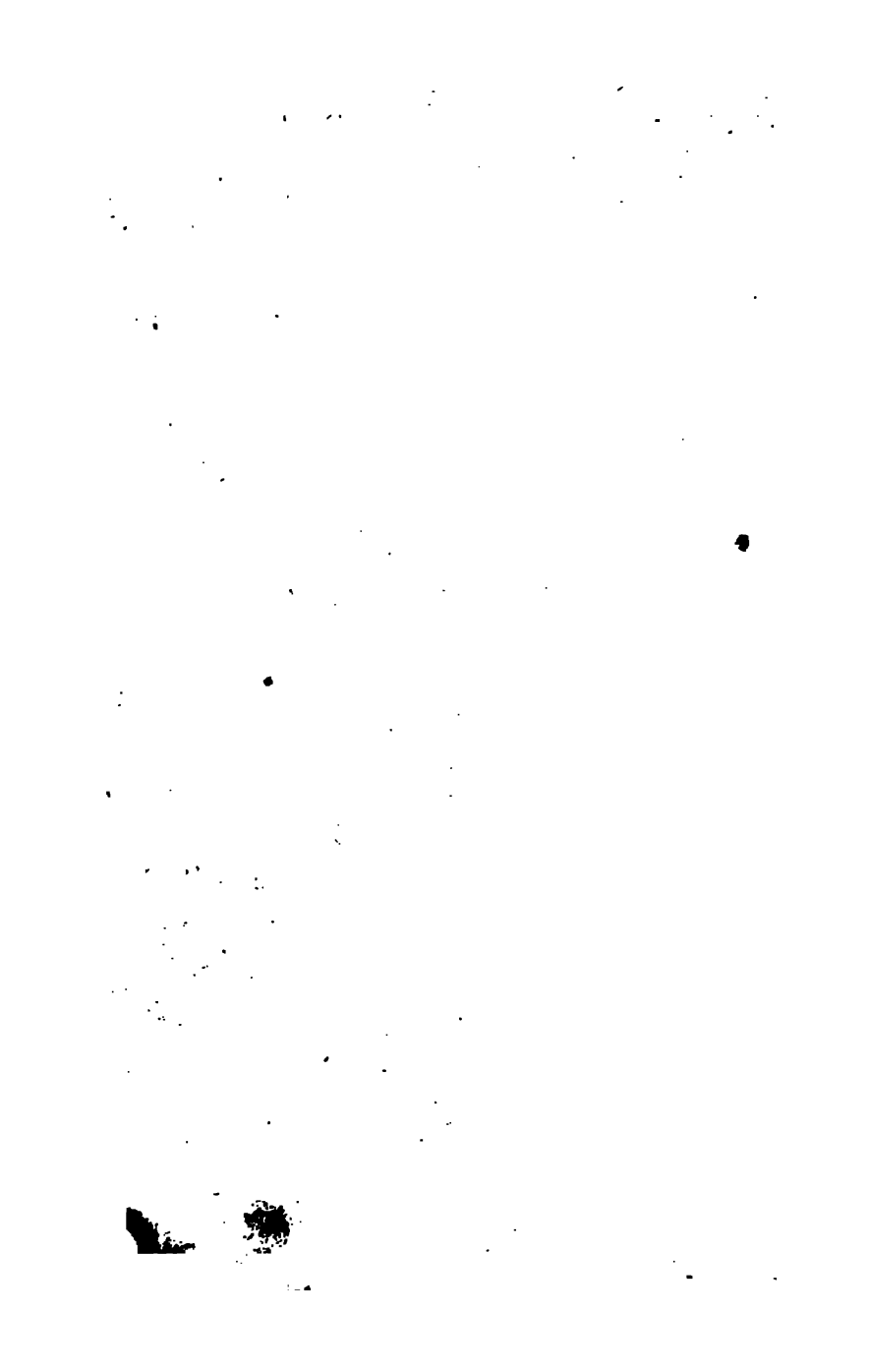


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STRIKING LIKENESSES.

V O L. III.



STRIKING LIKENESSES;

OR,

THE VOTARIES OF FASHION.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By LOUISA SIDNEY STANHOPE,

Author of 'Montbrasil Abbey,' and 'The
Bandit's Bride.'

If I lash vice in general fiction,
Is't I apply't, or self-conviction?

GAY.

V O L. III.

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STRIKING LIKENESSES.

CHAP. I.

"SEE you yon spire, Antonia?" said the marquis, as he led her forward. " 'Tis to the house of death I am conducting you. Nay, do not tremble; for you are innocent, sweet girl; and naught can harm you. It is a walk solitary and forlorn—a walk I have taken in the dead of night, when my plaints were unheard, and my lamentations disregarded—a walk which harrows up the soul of guilt, and whispers the horrors of retribution. Oh, Antonia, Antonia!"

He struck his clenched hand against

his breast, and uttered a piercing groan. "Let us return, my Lord," implored his terrified companion: "the evening is gloomy, the sky is lowering: the recollection of past events are often painful; and why should we seek to fan the embers of melancholy?" "It is a duty I have vowed to perform," said the marquis, pausing—"a duty, unconscious girl, my bleeding heart pants after. The world thinks me happy, because I am rich, great, and powerful—because I bear the semblance of gaiety in the dissipation of my family: but oh, Miss Forrester! could the soul be read—could its secret lineaments speak in the countenance, what a world of care, what a world of remorse, what a world of anguish would here be deciphered! The oppressed would turn away with pity: the slave would say—that man is not to be envied. But we lose time; let us proceed;" and again they hurried

forward. "It grows dark," he continued: the spot will be no longer discernible. Come, come, Antonia," at the same time plunging into a small grove of

"cypress and bay,
 Funereal, pensive birch its languid arms
 That drops, with waving willows doomed to weep,
 And shivering aspens."

A pleasing sadness stole over the spirits of Antonia: every impression of fear vanished; and the tear of sensibility, of unnamed emotion, trembled in her eye.

Gloomy and dark was the scene around. The marquis, clad in mystery, was the only living object she beheld: all else seemed wrapt in the grave's awful stillness. What to think she knew not: for what purpose, or whither he was conducting her, she had yet to learn. Suffering and dejected, she saw him labouring under some

hidden affliction : she saw his features pale, and his breast almost convulsed with the weighty secret. Perhaps in his youth he had sunk beneath the influence of his passions : perhaps he had committed a deed which blackened his future existence : perhaps he had deprived a fellow-creature of life—had hurled an unprepared and sinful soul before its great tribunal : perhaps in him she saw the baneful separator of her parents ! Yet no, impossible ! Had he not called himself their friend ? had he not been acknowledged by Sister Benedicta, as their benefactor and her preserver ? “ If I injure thee by these wild and incoherent flights of imagination,” she mentally ejaculated, “ as her eyes rested on his agitated countenance, “ may heaven pardon me ! ” “ I know the form is no longer visible,” exclaimed the marquis, as though he was answering a question which had been applied to him---“ I know it

is only the dust which covers her : I know I shall see a plain white tablet, and the inscription is already cut in my heart."

Antonia shuddered. " Why do you look so sad, Miss Forrester ?" he continued ; " why do you sigh so deeply ? You have murdered no innocence : you have betrayed no confidence---you have never---Hark," starting, " did I hear a shriek ? or was it the offspring of my distempered brain ? Ah ! again, again---just so did it sound when I passed the night upon the new-made grave---when I out-sighed the winds---when I laid my aching head upon the stony pillow, and sought, by unavailing contrition, to obliterate the pangs misery had inflicted." " It is but the screech-owl, my Lord," said Antonia ; " in yon dark yew she hails the approach of night." " True, true, I believe so," resumed the marquis, quickly : " but

now for reflection, now for fortitude!"
 bursting open a gate which led into a
 small burial-ground. "Tread light
 and softly, Antonia," he solemnly con-
 tinued; "let not your step be heard,
 for this is hallowed ground; let not
 imagination wander, for this is the last
 narrow resting-place of mortality.
 Look at these grass-grown graves!
 look at these white carved images!
 Each that slumbers here enshrouded
 was once like you and me, warm, ac-
 tive, full of life, full of vigour, full of
 youth, full of hope, full of happiness,
 full of sorrow: some, like me, the
 slaves of passion---some, like you, the
 offspring of virtue---some exposed to
 allurements --- some evading --- some
 sinking---some to be pitied---some to
 be deplored---and some, at whose de-
 parture even affection must rejoice."
 View well the close of man; for his
 days fleeth as a shadow, and the place

thereof shall know him no more. Weep
not, Antonia ; for here

“ ————— we end

The heart-ache, and the thousand natural
shocks

That flesh is heir to.”

Antonia sobbed. The marquis took
her hand, and led her along the wind-
ing foot-path. He stopped not until
he had reached a white marble tablet :
he could not speak : he pointed to it,
clasped his hand, and burst into tears.
Antonia eagerly bent forward ; she
wiped away the drops that bedimmed
her sight, and read, in deep-carved
characters—

As a violet

Torn from the parent bed,

Droop'd Antonia.

Her cheek became white as the uncon-
scious stone ; her heart throbbed with
terrifying foreboding ; her hands were
cold and stiff, and her bosom swelled

as though it would burst to vent its feelings. "Antonia!" she faintly repeated, gazing on the almost paralyzed marquis—"Father of heaven! what am I to believe? what am I to hear?" "Kneel upon the hallowed earth," solemnly articulated the marquis; "for beneath moulders the most perfect of beings---moulders your sweet semblance---moulders your injured, spotless, heart-broken mother."

Antonia uttered a cry of anguish. "My mother!" she repeated, pressing her livid lips to the clay-cold marble. "Was an angel," concluded the marquis. "And my father," breathlessly importuned the tortured girl---"a villain."

She heard no more: the blood receded from her heart; her senses failed her; her eyes were fixed, yet she saw not; her hands were clasped, yet she felt not; the shadows of death seemed to envelope her; and, with a piercing

groan, she would have fallen to the ground, had not the marquis stretched forth his arms to receive her. He placed her on the tablet; he knelt by her side; he wept over her; he rubbed her cold hands; he chafed her temples; he uttered the wild incoherent expressions of distraction; he called her the long-buried idol of his adoration—the long-worshipped object of his love. “Antonia, Antonia, Antonia!—I am——” She opened her eyes: she fixed them full upon him. “What? what?” she faintly murmured. “Your——” He paused: he looked intently on her; he saw the warm blood beginning to circulate: he saw her lips regaining their colour, and her eyes their animation, and, with a hysteric sob, articulated, “Your friend.” Disappointed and wretched, she arose from the tablet: her worst suspicions were confirmed; she had heard her father stigmatised by the name of vil-

lain; she had nothing more to fear, nothing to hope; despair chilled every avenue of her soul; she longed to throw herself by the side of her departed parent; she longed to be numbered among the senseless inhabitants of this last sanctuary—to lose at once the agony of disappointed affection, the shaft of misfortune, and the pang of remembrance. “Oh thou seraphic spirit!” she articulated, raising her hands to heaven, “who witnesses the anguish of thy orphan, and readest her heart bowed down with sorrow for thy calamities; visit with mercy and compassion, if still in existence, the unhappy being who shortened thy earthly pilgrimage—who embittered the cup of life, and dashed with disappointment its fairest promises: pour into his bosom the feelings of a parent, and teach him yet to bless his unoffending child!”

The marquis hid his face in his

hands; he seemed to fear to look upon her; he heard her prayer, yet he answered not; he dared not trust himself to speak, lest he should betray more than he intended. At length, in a voice of convulsive agitation, "Your father was a villain," he exclaimed: "you have heard the imprecation, yet do you not curse him." "Curse him! curse my father!" articulated Antonia, in accents of horror. "Ah God! how little do you know me! Tell me, my Lord; does he live? If I have a father, let me see him; let me kneel at his feet, and show him that my heart is full of compassion, full of tenderness." "I said not so," replied the marquis, fearfully. "Come, Miss Forrester, let us return: the night is dark, and this place is replete with horror. We have staid too long already; banish these vain conjectures, and know yourself an orphan." He snatched her hand, led her away.

a greater curse cannot the malice of fate denounce against me." "But, my dear marchioness," playfully resumed the duchess, "you look quite serious. I have been a bond-woman six years, and I vow nothing upon earth would be so desirable, as Delaware fancying he could find amusement independent of my society. Depend upon it, they have only been in search of the *ghost of innocence*." "Perhaps we might have been more successful, had we sought it *nearer*," said the marquis, with marked emphasis. "'Tis a strange fancy, to have a *tête-à-tête* with a man old enough to be one's father, to be sure," resumed the duchess, looking as if she wished to repay the marquis for the irony of his last remark; "but there's no accounting for taste; is there, Miss Foderster?"

Antonia felt an emotion of anger she could not restrain, and, with an

air of native dignity replied—"The insinuation your grace would convey is illiberal and unjustifiable: my guardian and myself know the motive of our walk; further explanation we judge unnecessary. Yet one thing more I must add—in my short visit to England I have learnt that innocence and circumspection cannot always escape the shaft of malignancy." "Colonel," said the duchess, turning with assumed indifference to Arkerman, "what character do you take the night of our masquerade? a warrior, a prince, a scaramouch, or a demigod?" "Nay," replied the colonel, laughing, "that must be a secret; the greatest pleasure in a mask, you know, lies in the disguise." "I'll bet a hundred I discover you," rejoined her grace. "Done," said Arkerman. "I suppose we shall have a censor in the company," and she glanced indignantly at Antonia. "No doubt the power of a censor will be

fully called forth," observed Lady Selina. "Your ladyship's remarks are always out of place," yawned Sunderland, negligently throwing his leg across the empty chair which stood next him. "Not when directed at you," rejoined Lady Selina, "for I know no being more blind to conviction, or more prone to error." "The retort is courteous, is it not? Sunderland," questioned Lord Carberry. "It was fairly called for," said Captain Glendenning, "and Lady Selina possesses the happy art of mingling satire with discretion, and reproof with good humour." "I hate a wit," articulated Sunderland, in a kind of half whisper, "and a female witling is of all things under heaven the most insufferable." "*In-d-e-e-d*," lingered out the duchess, in accents of incredulity; "take care, my good fellow, you don't get a sting which will abide as long as existence." "Your antipathy may

be easily accounted for," said Lady Selina, unconscious of her grace's allusion, "for I have heard of old, that a burnt child dreads the fire." A general laugh followed, and the discomfited beau sought refuge in silence.

The marquis complaining of indisposition rose to retire—he approached Antonia; every eye was fixed upon him; but appearing not to notice the attention he excited he stooped down, took her hand, and softly whispered:—"Remember your promise—be guarded." A faint blush tinged her cheek; the scene she had so lately witnessed recurred to her recollection, and a tear forced its passage—it fell from her eye upon his hand—he saw it, he half raised it to his lips, remembered where he was, checked the impulse, dropped it, and hurried from the apartment.

Antonia trembled—she fearfully arose, encountered the scrutinizing

glance of the marchioness, and again seated herself. "Mr. Dauverne," said the Duchess of Delaware. He answered not. "Mr. Dauverne." Still were his eyes in earnest thought bent upon the carpet. "Mr. Dauverne," a third time repeated her grace, "what may be the subject of your studies?—of whom could you possibly be thinking?" He attempted an apology; he laughed at his own abstraction, turned to the window, and again relapsed. "You are in love," said his tormentor, following him; "if ever man was, you are in love." He strove to appear indifferent, but a tell-tale crimson flushed his countenance. "It would be something singular if he was not," said Lord Carberry, "for in a few weeks he is to become a bridegroom. How long it will last afterwards time will determine."

"I love, I love, but dare not tell,
Ah me! my heart is breaking,"

sang the duchess, and with the most provoking smile she tapped him on the shoulder :—" You think yourself a riddle," she continued, in a whisper, " but I am a famous resolver."

Antonia carefully treasured in her heart the words of the marquis ; she reflected on her visit to the grave with a kind of religious awe—a kind of tender melancholy : she gazed on the miniature ; she moistened it with her tears ; she fervently kissed it. " Ah ; would that heaven had spared you to me, my mother !" she articulated—" would that you were here to comfort and to bless me ! Your smile would sweeten existence—your approbation would be more valuable to my soul than all the riches which in this world are centred. But alas ! you are gone ; I have wept o'er the marble that presses on your bosom : your last sigh lingered for your child, for when the hand of death was on you, when your

departing soul was about to sever the last slender ligament of frail mortality, even then my orphaned infancy was your care—even then, in the protection of the Marquis of Allingthorn, did you substitute a parent.”

The striking of a clock roused her from her meditations; already had two hours passed since she retired to her chamber, yet was she seated by the table, fearless of the shadow of darkness or the awful solemnity which hung on all around: the family had long since retired: St. Antholine's was wrapt in silence, for night, that void in creation, had hushed them to repose. She replaced the miniature, and rose to throw aside her dress; but softly approached the window to hear the dull monotony of the waves breaking against the pebbled shore. Heavy clouds shrouded the face of the moon, and the feathered surf was no longer visible; a faint glimmer of an immense

distance marked the silent course of a vessel, "wafted by the busy gale," and soon lost itself in the vast expanse. She raised her eyes to the starry firmament, thought of the beloved inhabitants of St. Eustacia, again pictured her mother, and breathed a deploring sigh.

Whilst yet she stood the sound of footsteps in the corridor made her start; she turned hastily round, she listened, and distinctly heard the approach of some one. Fancying she knew not what, dreading a thousand improbabilities, she flew to the door, and gently opened it in time to see Lord Westbrook, in a loose morning gown, glide into the opposite apartment—it was occupied by the Duchess of Delaware. Amazed, confounded, horror-struck, scarce believing the confirmation of her senses, Antonia re-closed the door, fastened it, and sunk almost breathless on a sofa. "In-

famous, shameless woman!" she murmured: "unhappy husband!—unhappy children! Ah heaven! canst thou suffer such ingratitude, such iniquity to pass unpunished?"

Gentle reader, remember Antonia was a *stranger* to the world—remember Antonia had been educated from her infancy in a cloister, where even the name of adultery could not gain admittance. She had not been like us *enlightened*—she had not been in the habits of reading the public prints, which too fatally proclaims the increasing dissoluteness of our morals; which daily shocks the ear by the annals of Doctors' Commons.

Long was it ere her agitation subsided; long was it ere she sunk to repose, and even then visions perturbed and distressing haunted her pillow. In the morning she awoke languid and unrefreshed; her cheeks had lost the vivid bloom with which nature had

adorned them, and her eyes betrayed the inquietude of her slumbers. She dreaded to meet the duchess; she dreaded to meet Lord Westbrook; she felt an antipathy, a mortal hatred arising towards them, which not all the meekness of her spirit the innate charity of her heart could subdue. She felt for the frailties of human nature; she pitied the delusions of simplicity; she wept the fall of Mary, but she condemned the lapse of the duchess. "Black must be the heart which shuns the voice of nature," she articulated; "which neglects the duty enforced by heaven; which yields to a licentious passion; which murders the peace of a husband; which blasts the hopes of an offspring, and with eternal, with irremediable dishonour brands her name with aduress!"

Antonia shuddered at the hypocrisy of the duchess, at the air of innocence and indifference she had assumed; and

when she joined the assembled party seated herself even next to Lord Carberry, because he was on the opposite side of the breakfast room. Pleased with her condescension the earl sought to express his gratitude; he saw the blood mantle in her cheek; he flattered himself he had subdued the frigidity of nature, and in a voice soft and tender whispered—"Captivating girl! never before did you appear so lovely."

Antonia turned her eyes towards Dauverne, and saw him anxiously regarding her; she instantly withdrew them; her heart beat quick, and a half-repressed sigh swelled her bosom. "I heard the strangest noise last night you can imagine," said Lady Selina. "Was you asleep, Antonia, soon after the clock struck two?" "No, I was not," she firmly replied, and then stole a glance at the duchess; but no visible emotion, no change of countenance betrayed her. "Strange!" she thought,

"conscious yet to brave discovery." She judged the human heart by her own; she knew not that the lacker of vice veils the genuine feelings of the soul, and clothes the features with unchanging, unabashing confidence. "Did you then not hear a noise?" questioned Lady Selina. "I certainly did," replied Antonia. "As sure as I am in existence," she rejoined, "I heard the sound of a footstep in the corridor." "Now for more ghosts," said the duchess, laughing; "I thought St. Antholine's was haunted; pray in what shape does it appear? Come, Lady Selina, do tell us; is it a headless virgin? or is it the spectre of Peter the wild boy?" "It seems a ghost of taste, however," said Lord Westbrook, "for it only visits the ladies." "Your grace must surely have heard it," resumed Lady Selina, "for you sleep in the apartment immediately opposite Miss Forrester." "Not I, indeed," replied

the duchess, gaily ; " let me remember ; last night, when the clock struck two, I do think I was dreaming of Beddingfield and the measles." " Was you frightened, Miss Forrester ?" inquired Lord Carberry. " Not frightened, but horror-struck," answered Antonia, and again her eyes rested on the Duchess of Delaware. " Dear ! that is surprising," exclaimed her grace, " educated in a monastery and horror-struck at a ghost. I thought all conventual chapels were visited by the spirits of departed vestals." " The spirit of devotion alone dwells within the sacred walls of St. Eustacia," rejoined Antonia, firmly ; " not such as visited the corridor last night." " You saw it then," said Lady Geraldine, with a smile of incredulity. " Your ladyship must excuse me," replied Antonia. " I acknowledge to have heard it." " Come, come, you must confess, Miss Forrester," exclaimed

the viscount, laughing; "this is a strange mysterious tale, and we have all curiosity." "Who can enforce it, my lord?" proudly demanded Antonia. "Nay, that is an office we can none of us assume, certainly," rejoined Westbrook, "we can only supplicate." Antonia replied not, but the expression of her countenance indicated contempt. "After all, 'tis the ideal phantom of imagination," observed Lady Geraldine—" 'tis only the vision of an hour." "You are incredulous, Geraldine," said Lady Selina: "continue so, but remember no argument on earth will induce me to discredit the evidence of my senses. I acknowledge I was alarmed; I acknowledge I was too terrified to open my door, but I am convinced I heard a person pass by the chamber and—" "Saw," interrupted the duchess, laughing,

"A pigmy sprite
Pop through the key-hole swift as light."

Antonia caught her eye, and for the first time the duchess sank beneath the scrutiny. "Alas, poor ghost!" ejaculated Westbrook, in theatrical accents. "I'll watch to-night; perchance 'twill walk again'—And if I see it 'I'll speak to it, tho' hell itself should gape and bid me hold my peace.' Fear not, gentle Selina! at two I'll pace the corridor." "You'll find it an unsatisfactory experiment, believe me, my lord," said the duchess; "for should Lady Selina or Miss Forrester happen to see you, 'tis not clear to me but they fancy the ghost has assumed your likeness." "It is not a novel one," remarked Antonia, and again she caught the eye of the duchess. "Listen to-night, my dear Lady Selina," resumed the viscount, "and when the great clock from the turret strikes two, when the shrill chanticler proclaims the approach of morning hear me parleying with the

airy visitant—undaunted I'll draw near
it, and with most appalling boldness
repeat

"Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heav'n, or blasts from
hell,
Be thy intent wicked or charitable."

"Hush, hush, hush! for mercy's
sake, hush!" exclaimed the duchess,
rising from the sofa, and placing her
hands upon her ears. "Let's no more
of this foolish ghost story, or really we
shall be frightened from St. Antho-
line's."

In the evening Antonia, shrinking
from the offensive gallantry of Lord
Carberry, quitted the cloisters, and
stole alone to the beach. Not a breeze
agitated the atmosphere, or swelled
the dark surface of the ocean; serene
but sombre was the evening; no cheer-
ful ray penetrated the heavy clouds
which shrouded the splendour of day's

departing orb, and the intense heat was so oppressive that Nature in languid silence appeared to droop.

Still Antonia pursued her solitary ramble; and as imagination traced in glowing colours the faultless figure of the too amiable Dauverne, she thought of, nay almost envied, the apparently insensible Lady Geraldine, and indulged the flights of fancy till every vivifying gleam of cheerfulness vanished, and tears, the silent attributes of despair, stole swiftly down her cheeks. She saw him the comforter of the desponding—she saw him cheer the heart-broken William; she felt herself culpable, yet could she not efface from her mind the past scenes of imagined happiness. She heard the friendly voice of Dr. Moreland, warning her against yielding to an infatuation dangerous to her peace; yet could she not subjugate her feelings or subdue her prepossession. “No, never, never,”

she mentally ejaculated, fearfully shuddering, "can I forget his virtues; never, never cease to adore his perfections; never, never cease to love——" she started—virtue trembled, honour seemed to recoil—"the husband of *Lady Geraldine*." The conscious blush was awakened and marked her cheek with the first tint of shame. "Oh, mentors of my youth! guides of my infancy! revered mother of St. Eustacia! tender sister, Benedicta! where now are your instructions?—where now the warning-counsels of your affection? Gracious heaven!" and she pressed her hand upon her heart, "have I lived to become the slave of an attachment which virtue blushes in acknowledging?" She gazed not upon the threatening clouds; she dreamt not of an approaching tempest till the thunder in hoarse murmurs began to roll, and heaven opening poured on the black bosom of the ocean

its lurid fires. She started, she looked fearfully towards St. Apholine's and trembled at the distance she had wandered.

Nearer and nearer did the storm approach, and the terrific peals in loud reverberations rocked the white cliff shore. She looked around for a place of refuge, but no hospitable cottage, no friendly hovel presented itself; on one side rose inaccessible rocks, on the other broke the angry billows, agitated by conflicting elements, and sprinkling with their white foam her defenceless head. Whether to return, or whether to creep for shelter beneath the impending crags she knew not, for already in large drops the rain began to descend, and the surcharged clouds threatened to pour down their torrents. In the moment of alarm when

“Peal on peal
Crash'd horrible, convulsing heaven and earth,”

she saw a person hastening, almost flying towards her—it was no visionary object—it was no ideal fancy—it was Dauverne. From the window he beheld her descend to the beach, and trembling for her safety he cared not what interpretation the world might impute to his conduct; he defied its malice—he defied its censure; he forgot all his plans of prudent forbearance and determined indifference: he knew Antonia exposed to the pitiless elements, and flew to save or perish with her. “Merciful heaven!” he exclaimed, gazing on her pale and agitated countenance, “where can we find a shelter? ’Tis death to see you thus, Miss Forrester,” and his voice softened to supplication, “lean on my arm—suffer me to support you.” “Why have you left St. Antholine’s?” she faltered—“why have you braved the storm? Indeed, Mr. Dauverne, I could have borne it better had—”

you been safe, her heart dictated, but the words passed not her lips. "To save a life ten thousand thousand times more precious than my own," rejoined Dauverne, thrown off his guard, and taking her hand with impassioned tenderness. "Antonia, by yon power, awful in mercy, tremendous in wrath—by yon power I swear—" Long and reiterated was the crash which followed; Antonia shrieked, for a vivid flash darted across her eyes, and her cheeks became still paler. The rain poured, and her thin garments were wet with its violence. Again Dauverne anxiously looked around, and catching her in his arms rushed towards a hollow in the rock which promised shelter. "There rest in safety," he exclaimed, depositing his treasure; "fear not, guilt may stand appalled, but innocence like your's has sure protection." Antonia could not answer, a thousand nameless

fears filled her heart and restrained the power ; she leant against the flinty side of the recess, her trembling limbs refused support, and but for this upholder she must have fallen. " Violent and tremendous is the storm," murmured Dauverne, gazing stedfastly upon her, " but what is this war of elements, compared to what rages in my bosom ? To-morrow the face of nature will again be clothed in smiles ; yon turbulent ocean will be calm ; the thunder will no longer roar ; the lightning will no longer play :—but to-morrow," and he struck his hand against his forehead, " the same despair will pursue me, the same misery will rankle in my breast, the same affliction will be my portion." Tears streamed down the cheeks of Antonia. " Wretched, wretched world !" she ejaculated, " thy abode is sorrow, thy best prospects delusive." " Not to you, Miss Forrester," exclaimed Dauverne, " fe-

licity smiles upon your fate, and joy awaits you with her promises. Once did I court her, once I thought myself not unhappy; but misery came in so fair a form that my heart expanded at her approach, opened wide to receive her; and what still aggravates my distress still does she smile, still does she wear the same heaven-born look, still does she fan the flame, and stamps unconsciously her image on my heart. Say, Miss Forrester, are you not happy?—has this world proved the scene you pictured?—has devastation raged around and left no resting place for you? Can murmuring discontented man repine when angels suffer?” Still was she silent. “You have a heart—you have a soul, Antonia,” he continued, “which pities human misery: tell me then you are happy; acknowledge yourself at peace, and I shall be content: let me see you cheerful—let me see your features as they were wont

to be, decked in smiles, and affliction's heaviest weight will be removed."

"I shall be happy," articulated Antonia, "in the sanctuary my heart has chosen." "Thank heaven! thank heaven!" repeated Dauverne.

"Say what sanctuary, what envious spot will witness this bliss?" "It will be calm," she resumed, breathing a heavy sigh, "time will glide smooth and unruffled, for no discordant passions rage within St. Eustacia." "St. Eustacia!" he exclaimed, with a palsied start, "you, you, Antonia," almost gasping for breath; "become a nun; shut yourself in the cold cheerless walls of a convent; renounce a world you was formed to ornament; withdraw from society which knows but to adore you: leave but to memory an image so beloved,—Avert it heaven! To idolize without hope is sure sufficient punishment. Take not to thyself the being who can alone sweeten

existence—the being my heart can never cease to adore.”

From the paleness of death Antonia's cheeks flushed scarlet; her heart beat high—to know herself beloved by Dauverne was ecstasy, yet momentary was the transport; she remembered his engagement and turned to quit the cavern. “Where are you going, Miss Forrester!” he inquired, trembling at the sentiments he had betrayed. “To St. Antholine's,” she timidly replied. “The storm still rages,” resumed Dauverne, “you must not quit this shelter.” “I care not for the storm,” murmured Antonia, “I will instantly return to St. Antholine's; would I had never quitted it!” “You are offended,” said Dauverne, in accents of despondence; “my presumption is punished, for I have forfeited your esteem.” “Not offended,” she faintly articulated, “but distressed.” “To retract is impossible,” he re-

joined.—“ In an unguarded moment I have discovered what I meant ever to conceal ; yet despise me not, Miss Forrester, for if a heart dotting even to madness, a heart alive only to your perfections, and drooping, bleeding at the fetters fate impels awakens pity, then have I a claim.” “ This is a language, Mr. Dauverne,” said Antonia, and she struggled to assume an air of displeasure, “ both unexpected and improper ; a language which the remembrance of Lady Geraldine should forbid.” “ A language,” interrupted Dauverne, taking her hand, “ which despair dictates, but which honour shrinks at.—Antonia, do not spurn me ; say that you will attribute all to the delirium of a moment ; say that you will pardon, that you will pity me.” “ Without offence how can we pardon ?” said Antonia, forcing a languid smile. “ Let us return,” and

she drew her hand from his; "the thunder rumbles in distance, and the rain descends with less violence; indeed a shelter is no longer necessary." "Lean on my arm then," said Dauverne, "and convince me, by accepting a support, you have not learnt to despise me."

Silent and sad they proceeded towards St. Antholine's: Antonia's heart was full and her eyes rested on the ground; Dauverne was alike abstracted, he thought of the confession he had made, and condemned his impetuosity. "Miss Forrester," he articulated, as they entered St. Antholine's, "you withdraw not your esteem, you cast me not from your friendship, you promise to forgive, to forget this digression." "I do, I do," murmured Antonia. "You will think of me," and he pressed her hand to his lips, "as a friend—as a brother." "I

will," she emphatically said, "and may you ever consider me a sister."

She withdrew her hand, flew up the stairs, and hurried to her own apartment. No sooner did she find herself alone than every necessity for restraint vanished; she threw herself on the bed, and in a plentiful shower of tears gave free vent to her feelings.

-Every idea was forgotten in the sorrow of Dauverne—her visit to the grave—the misfortunes of her parents—the dejection of the marquis—the coolness of the marchioness were all alike absorbed; she thought herself the most persecuted, the most unfortunate of beings, and for the moment rashly yielded to despair; she forgot the precepts inculcated by her beloved instructress, sister Benedicta, in St. Eustacia's convent—she forgot that virtue should not

—“Dread the frowns of fate,
Her's what no wealth can win, no power create!
A little world of clear and cloudless day,
Nor wreck'd by storms, nor moulder'd by decay;
A world, with memory's ceaseless sunshine blest,
The home of happiness, an honest breast.”

CHAP. II.

“ Ah, would to heaven, my dear friends, Doctor and Mrs. Moreland, were here !” sighed Antonia, as tears of vexation stole down her cheek. “ The counsels of the one would assist, while the other would affectionately sympathise in my distresses.” She thought of the cold forbidding *hauteur* of the marchioness with regret ; but transient was the reflection, for every idea was centred in the approaching marriage between Dauverne and Lady Geraldine ; and the certainty conveyed to her heart a sickening kind of sensation which she could not restrain. She trembled as she quickly paced the shrubbery : her cheeks were died with conscious blushes. “ Oh, that I had

never quitted St. Eustacia!" she murmured, as she entered a grotto; "or that I had continued to reside beneath the peaceful happy roof of the vicarage!" She thought of the fortnight which had there glided so swiftly away; she retraced the moment when, supporting the slumbering Rosa, she first beheld Dauverne. Poor self-deluding Antonia! in that moment her artless bosom received an impression, which neither time or reason could subjugate. Her hat had fallen off; her head reclined on her hand; and her glowing cheek, as the full rose wet with the dew of morning, glistened with a truant tear. "Incomprehensible Lady Geraldine!" she mentally ejaculated, "how little conscious do you appear of your happiness!"

"O that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!"

gallantly exclaimed the Earl of Carberry, pausing at the entrance of the

grotto. Antonia started; she snatched her hat, and would have quitted the recess, but his lordship seized her hand, and forcibly conducted her to a seat. "Nay, fly me not, beautiful Miss Forrester; for this full hour I have been seeking you, and should you frown upon my petition, you will drive me to despair; for, by the heavenly smile which plays upon those coral lips, I could not bear the heavy weight of your displeasure and live." "My lord," said Antonia, in a voice of astonishment. "Truth is, divine Miss Forrester, the Marchioness of Allington, the Duchess of Delaware, Lady Geraldine, Lady Selina, Westbrook, Sunderland, nay, all the honourables assembled at St. Antholine's, have signed the petition, and it waits alone on you to be enforced." "Name it, my lord," said Antonia, with an impatience she in vain sought to restrain,

"for I will no longer be detained."

"Then

"———lend thy serious hearing,

To what I shall unfold,"

exclaimed the earl, in a voice and gesture truly theatrical. Antonia endeavoured to repress a smile, and awaited the *dénouement* in silence. "Promise me, patiently and unconditionally to listen to my tale." "I do—proceed, my lord." "Why then," rejoined Lord Carberry, snatching her reluctant hand, and eagerly kissing it, "by heaven, you are the most transcendently charming, the most superlatively exquisite woman I ever beheld; and

"———Though I am call'd

"Another's now, my heart is wholly thine."

Grant me but one in return, fair saint,
and had heaven given me

"———such another world,

Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,

I'd not exchange thee for it."

"My lord," said Antonia, with a grave and dignified air, "you would not wish the Marquis of Allingthorn to hear this discourse." "Upon my soul," exclaimed the earl, with the most perfect nonchalance, "I never addressed such a discourse to any marquis in my life." Again Antonia attempted to quit the grotto, but Carberry, placing himself between her and the entrance, compelled her to remain.

"Promise to grant the petition," he resumed, "and, upon the honour of a gentleman, I will restore you to liberty." "Never unheard," said Antonia. "Why then," sinking on his knee, and forcibly retaining her hand, "by those features, outvying the bright glow of celestial beauty, I swear to retain this envied station, till you revoke the sentence. Nay, turn not that face away, for those eyes—

NOV. 11. 1841.

“ _____ In Heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright,
That birds would sing, and think it were not
night.”

“ Arise, my lord,” exclaimed the indignant Antonia, “ this unmeaning display of sentiment is both ridiculous and contemptible: arise, or from my guardian I must seek protection, and force him to teach you the deference due to my character.” “ Think not I heed the marquis,” he replied, “ for

“ Alack ! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but
sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.”

“ For heaven’s sake, Lord Carberry,” implored Antonia, “ either explain your meaning, or let me pass: you distress, you offend me.” “ Nay, then it is not the moment to entreat,” said the earl; “ yet methinks I may trust thee, for even in anger thou art

a thousand times more resistless than
the smiles of the Medician Venus.—

“ O, thou doth teach the torches to burn bright!
Thy beauty hangs upon the cheek of night,
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop’s ear :
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear !
So shows a snowy dove————”

“ This insult is insupportable, my lord ; I will no longer be sported with,” exclaimed Antonia, and she arose from her seat, and cast on him a look of offended dignity. “ Nay, then, pardon me,” he replied, “ and the mystery shall be solved.—You must know, Miss Forrester, my poor abilities once gave satisfaction in a theatrical performance, where, as Romeo, I strutted my hour upon the stage.’ In short, I am re-elected, but renounce the call, unless Antonia will become a Juliet—what love can do, that dares love attempt.’ Say then, wilt thou be my Juliet ?

"Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she."

"I, my lord," said Antonia, firmly,
"no, never; my talents are not that
way inclined: indeed you must excuse
me." "Excuse you!" repeated the
disappointed Carberry; "renounce my
hopes at once, defeat my project, ac-
knowledge my powers of persuasion
vanquished—perish the thought! No,
Miss Forrester, that is too difficult a
task to be enforced." "It was a hope
formed upon ill grounds, my lord,"
replied Antonia; "a hope which my
actions could never justify. The Du-
chess of Delaware and Lady Geraldine
no doubt have had experience in the
science: I never saw a play; how
then can I act a part?" "Suffer me
to be the tutor," eagerly rejoined the
earl; "suffer me to instruct you in the
rules of the drama, and soon will my
lovely scholar become a proficient."

'Tis a natural and easy character to be performed ; feel but the part and success must be the result. How delightful in this grotto to rehearse the scenes !—Oh, divine Miss Forrester, heaven is in the anticipation !” “ My lord, you already know my determination,” said Antonia, coolly ; “ further importunity is unnecessary ; I never will comply with your request,” “ You are unalterably fixed ?” “ Yes, unalterably.” “ Why then let them elect another Romeo : though Melpomene herself would be my Juliet, yet would I reject the part. Cruel and unpitying Miss Forrester !” pursued the earl, “ so firmly to resist my pleadings, so unfeelingly to baffle my arguments, so coldly to disregard my persuasions : yet, might I flatter myself 'tis only to the public representation of Juliet, bliss, hope, ecstasy, would chase disappointment, and confirm me your slave for ever. How

soft would the moments glide under such thralldom ! how roseate would be the chains forged by the hand of beauty !” “ I must go, my lord,” said Antonia, fearful, yet unwilling to believe his allusion : “ the flights which in Romeo might be pardoned, in the Earl of Carberry must be despised. Let me pass ; the scene is closed ; a renewal can only offend. I must entreat, nay insist upon my freedom. By what privilege am I thus insulted ?” “ By the privilege of love,” exclaimed Carberry, again seizing her hand, which she in vain struggled to prevent— “ by a privilege which owns no restraint, which acknowledges no restrictions.—

“ Stay, stay your steps, and listen to my vows ;
 ’Tis a *kind* interview that fate allows.”

Again Antonia endeavoured to withdraw her hand, while a shuddering sensation, as at the approach of a noxious animal, chilled her heart: he saw

the colour recede from her lips, from her cheeks, and presently return its crimson tide—he saw her tremble, but vanity, flattered by her emotion, whispered—might not timidity, or the smothered seeds of affection create this agitation?—He drew her towards him, and addressed her in the accents of tenderness. Terrified, she started, she would have fled, but with the provoking smile of exultation he detained her. She looked up and beheld Dauverne; but what an alteration in the expression of that countenance, whose unclouded serenity had indicated a mind in which no baneful passion could obtrude:—now was it darkened and transformed: his eyes with indignant glances rested on Lord Carberry, and darted a fire which appeared terrific. “Fear not a longer detention, Miss Forrester,” he exclaimed, leading her from the confounded and

disappointed earl; "you are now at liberty to return to St. Antholine's, and for his lordship, should he wish an explanation, it is with me he must seek it."

"And satisfaction as well as explanation," said the mortified peer, "for let me acquaint you, Mr. Dauverne, that I consider your conduct both intrusive and——"

Antonia heard no more; terrified at what might result from increasing passion, she fled in the hope of meeting the Marquis of Allingthorn, or some one to whom she could declare her apprehensions, and claim as an intercessor. Fear had chased the roses from her complexion, for already, in her 'mind's eye,' did she behold the sword of Lord Carberry steeped in the blood of Dauverne. Love shuddered at the supposition, her heart seemed to sink within her—"Father of Heaven, forbid it!" she articulated, as tears

streamed down her cheeks—"Father of heaven, avert the horror of such a *rencontre!*"

"Where are you hastening?—what is the matter?—has any one fallen into the sea, or jumped over the cliff?" inquired Lady Geraldine, meeting her at the entrance of the shrubbery. "Speak, Antonia, for if you look so pitiful I shall actually prepare my nerves for a tale of terror." "Mr. Danverne," said Antonia, faintly, and then paused. "Well, and what of poor Mr. Danverne?" questioned her ladyship, in a tone of mimic sympathy. "I have unfortunately—" "Well, child, go on." "Beware the occasion of a dispute between him and Lord Garbatty." "Pshaw! is that all the mischief?" interrupted Lady Geraldine, bursting into a fit of laughter: "dry up your tears, my pretty innocent, and learn to take things like other people. And so you are afraid of the

consequences, afraid of occasioning a breeze, and being talked of. Why, my dear, silly, trembling girl, let them fight——” “Fight!” repeated the agitated Antonia, starting as though the word contained the power of annihilation. “Aye, to be sure,” resumed her ladyship, “let them fight.—There is nothing like a duel to immortalize a woman’s name; the Duchess of Delaware, nay half the belles in England, would give the world to be in your situation:—think now how it will sound in the papers:—‘A duel was lately fought in Cornwall, between the right honourable the Earl of C—— and the honourable Mr. D——. The ball of the former lodged in the shoulder of the latter; but the noble earl, we are sorry to state, received the fire of his antagonist in the head, and but for the thickness of the skull the brain must have been perforated. Hopes are entertained of his lordship’s reco-

very.—We understand the fair author of this dispute is the accomplished and lovely Miss F——, ward to the Marquis of A——.’ ‘ Lord ! what would I give to be Miss F——’ will be lisped from a thousand pretty mouths. ‘ Who can it be ?’—‘ Dear ! if the earl had been killed.’ ‘ I wonder if she is so very lovely !’ ‘ Lovely, pshaw ! every one’s lovely in the newspapers ; ’tis a word takes but little room, and I never read of a *plain* woman of quality in my life.’ ‘ Well, well, pretty or not pretty she has caused a duel, however, and——” “ This trifling is insupportable, Lady Geraldine,” interrupted the tortured Antonia ; “ I thought humanity would have interposed, and silenced even the powers of ridicule ; but I find I must seek advice elsewhere.” “ Comfort I can give,” rejoined Lady Geraldine, “ but advice I have not the presumption to offer, because, for a very good

reason, I am a bankrupt in the commodity. Now do look less sad, do look less frightened, for to a certainty they will not fight; I'd bet thousands to a shilling in favour of an amicable adjustment. I tell you they are not the fighting sort: Dauverne's morality and Carberry's respect for his own person are sure preventives. Why you may as well suspect Sunderland, who never shot at more than a partridge in his life, and ten to one then but he missed fire. Depend upon it, all will end in smoke."

"I hope so," murmured Antonia.

"So do I," continued her ladyship;

"if you do; but if you are really serious you must keep your own counsel, for if it should get wind 'tis possible they may be obliged to fight for their own credit. I believe it often happens, in these *honourable* conclusions to *honourable* squabbles between *honourable* gentlemen, that they would be very happy to digest the affront

without the aid of a leaden bullet, was it not for "the whips and scorns of the time," the contumely of the world, and the spurns of society: but there's a something in the word *scorn* which will make a man brave in spite of nature; and even in the *impulse* of the moment, should he be precipitated behind a tree, he will come forth in most elaborate array, and in a high *sound-
ing address* endeavour to prevail on the world to think him a hero." "Well, but what can be done?" importuned the distressed girl. "Nothing," replied Lady Geraldine, taking her arm and proceeding towards St. Antoline's, "but to take it patiently and trust to Dauverne's discretion: See, here comes the Duchess of Delaware, Westbrook, and Sunderland; do, for heaven's sake, banish this cast of sorrow, or really they will suspect a something."

Antonia forced a smile, and struggled to comply with her ladyship's advice ; but still was her heart dejected—still was uneasiness and doubt impressed upon her features. " Where have you been hiding yourself ? " inquired her grace ; " for we have been seeking you in the chapel, among the cloisters, on the beach, and through the park . " " Sauntering , " replied Lady Geraldine, " and weighing courage in the scale of criticism . " Antonia looked fearfully towards her. " And pray , " questioned the viscount, " whose may preponderate ? " " Not your's . " The duchess laughed. " Mine , " whispered Sunderland. " ' Pon my honour , " archly, " we have never put it in the scale ; I was fearful it might evaporate . " " Is it of that nature ? " asked Westbrook. " Yes, I believe it is a little like love , " replied Lady Geraldine ; " those who feel that pas-

nion the most talk the least about it ; consequently those who possess the greatest share of courage make the smallest boast." " And what thinks Miss Forrester ?" said his lordship. " Of what, my lord ?" she replied, starting and blushing. " Of love," he rejoined ; " surely, a being so calculated to inspire the flame has the privilege to think." The duchess bit her lip. " What, still silent ; can the sweet Antonia," and he took her hand and softly pressed it, " be a novice in a passion which to show herself is to awaken ?" The duchess frowned, and snatching a pearl chain from her neck, twisted it carelessly round her fingers. Antonia proudly withdrew her hand ; she remembered the supposed spectre in the corridor, and shuddered at his duplicity. " Do let us return," said her grace, fretfully ; " the sun scorches one to death, and I see nothing very inviting. Come, Mr. Sunderland, give

me your arm," and she cast on Westbrooke a look of reproach and haughtiness. "Is it the *sin* who excites this proposal?" significantly questioned Lady Geraldine. "'Tis a famous motion, however," said the viscount, gaily, and he returned with exultation the glance of the duchess. "Suffer me, Miss Forrester," offering his arm, "to be your supporter." "Excuse me, my lord, I need no assistance." "Had Dauverne made the offer," he resumed, "would it thus have been rejected? Ah, that blush! well, don't fear, I'll keep the secret." "What secret?" exclaimed the mortified girl. "Were we not talking of love, Miss Forrester?" rejoined Westbrooke. "I know neither the subject or the allusion, my Lord," she replied, and then quickened her pace to overtake Lady Geraldine.

The viscount reading her sentiments returned to his allegiance and again

the duchess smiled; she even condescended to accept his arm, and when they reached St. Antholine's proposed extending their ramble to the cloisters. "The sun has retreated behind a curtain," observed Lady Geraldine, with marked emphasis. Her grace silently smiled at the innuendo, while Antonia, declining the excursion, quitted them. Dauverne entered at an opposite door as she reached the vestibule. "This is fortunate!" he exclaimed—"I was seeking you, Miss Forrester, empowered by Lord Carberry, to offer an apology for his strange and ungentlemanly conduct." "I can pardon all, everything," she eagerly answered; "if you as my champion are not involved." A momentary gleam of rapture irradiated the features of Dauverne. "Lord Carberry, relying on the excellence of your heart," he continued, presenting a folded paper, "offers this atonement

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for past impropriety." "Indeed," said Antonia, still doubtful, "all I require is an amicable adjustment—tell me my apprehensions are groundless, and I wish for nothing further."

"You are too lenient, Miss Forrester," rejoined Dauverne. "Do tell me," she implored, forgetting the confession of his love—forgetting everything but his supposed danger—"do tell me," and she laid her hand upon his arm, "that my fears are unfounded—that I am not so unfortunate as to endanger him I esteem?" "Miss Forrester," he said, taking her hand and pressing it respectfully to his lips, "I assure you upon my honour, the consequences extend not beyond that paper." "Then am I happy," she exclaimed, unfolding and eagerly perusing it.

"The Earl of Carberry offers to the wounded feelings of Miss Forrester

this poor atonement for his violent and unjustifiable behaviour, in an accidental interview he held with her in the grotto. He acknowledges his actions to have been ungentlemanly, and his conversation improper. Lord Carberry, relying solely upon the abused clemency of Miss Forrester, ventures to send by Mr. Dauverne this apology."

"Are you satisfied, Miss Forrester?" inquired Dauverne. "Perfectly so, and grateful for your interference," said Antonia, tearing to pieces the testimony of the earl's conviction. "But what am I to say to the delinquent?" he inquired, smiling. "Say that I have accepted and destroyed the apology," she replied; "say that henceforth not even in memory shall the incident retain existence." "Generous lovely victor!" said Dauverne, "who would not infringe the law to

be a partaker of such mercy?" At dinner Antonia met the earl without the slightest appearance of displeasure; the remainder of the day passed as usual, save a grand concert held in the evening, at which all the surrounding gentry assembled. Our heroine performed sometimes upon the harp, sometimes upon the piano forte; and once, in compliance with the request of the marquis, she accompanied the lute with her exquisite voice.

The tremulous interruptions of diffidence gradually diminished as her powers were called forth: the vivid glow of her countenance faded to its native tint, and she acquitted herself with an ease and correctness which astonished her hearers. All present were enraptured with her skill; and even the Duchess of Delaware joined her praise to the general acclamations. "Upon my honour, I know not which is most worthy of admiration, the per-

former or the performance," said Lord Westbrook, addressing a stranger loud enough to call the truant blush into the cheeks of Antonia: "positively she possesses the power of the basilisk, for she fascinates in spite of resistance." "*Fascinates in spite of resistance!*" repeated the Duchess of Delaware, who had overheard the concluding sentence: "may I inquire who may be the dangerous Circe?" "Can Laura ask?" whispered the viscount, in smothered accents, and then turned to see if his reply had been overheard. The duchess sweetly smiled. "Do, for mercy's sake, Lady Geraldine, try if you can turn the current of praise," said her Grace: "Miss Forrester will certainly become quite self-sufficient." "I would defy the praise of the whole world to banish humility from her bosom," observed Dauverne. "We are none of us impervious to flattery," she resumed. "Pardon me," said Dau-

verne, "for differing from your Grace in opinion." "Miss Forrester is beyond the reach of flattery," said Lord Carberry, who till now had been a silent admirer of her performance: he remembered the morning's scene in the grotto, and checked the professions of rapture rising to his lips. "What might be styled adulation to thousands," he continued, "becomes, when addressed to her, the native ebullition of truth."

The duchess bit her rosy lips, internally wished the unconscious girl buried in a convent, and, burning with envy, hastened to the other side of the saloon.

"Antonia," said Lady Selina, joining her in the morning, "the Countess of Carberry has not forgotten our promise of passing a week at Falmouth. Here is a pressing and friendly invitation for to-morrow. I do think, if you have no objection, we will accept it," "So

far from it," replied Antonia, " that I anticipate pleasure in her society." " Besides," resumed her friend, " we shall return in time for the grand doings : have you fancied a character for the masquerade?" " No," faintly murmured Antonia, for her heart sickened at the suggestion.

The masquerade was to be held on the day of Lady Geraldine's coming of age. Preparations were making, and cards of invitation were already distributed many miles round : and yet it was not that day which filled with despondency the soul of Antonia : alas ! it was the succeeding week ; for ere that had elapsed, Lady Geraldine, the beautiful *votary* at the shrine of *fashion*, was to become a bride. She sought to suppress her feelings : she sought to struggle with the weight of anguish which threatened almost to crush her : she sought, beneath a treacherous smile, to conceal the sighs of an ach-

Antonia started: she looked anxiously at her friend, and a conscious blush o'erspread her features. "It is," pursued Selina, "both unjustifiable and unfeeling; surely the sacred covenant of marriage—the choice of a being to whom the hopes and fears, the pains and pleasures, the joys and sorrows of life should be imparted—ought to be an unprejudiced privilege! In matters of state, individuals must yield to the public good; but where pride, ambition, or covetousness, are the incentives, the parties are to be condemned." "Not one of those motives sway the actions of Mr. Dauverne," faintly articulated Antonia; "his generous soul is superior to such subterfuge." "True," resumed her companion. "The marquis and his brother, Lord Henry Dauverne, formed the contract, and in the honour and duty of their children leave it to be enforced. Ambition swayed my fa-

ther, who sighed in vain for a son ; avarice my uncle, in the accumulating fortune of Geraldine. “ ’Tis well the dotting partiality of a godmother centred not her wealth in me ; for indeed,” and Sir Frederic Stanley flashed across her memory, “ I could never, at the instigation of others, have resigned the boast of liberty. They would have found me,” and an animated expression, sparkling in her soft eyes, irradiated her lovely countenance, “ a turbulent spirit, and in such a case as hard to bend as the oak, the proud bulwark of Britain.”

Antonia forced a smile : she knew the meekness of Selina’s soul, and shook her head incredulous. “ It is a pity,” she remarked, deeply sighing, “ that the worth of Mr. Dauverne should be indebted to any principle but affection for a wife. Surely his appearance, his manners, and his virtues, are sufficient to obtain a heart !”

“ And yet,” resumed her friend, “ Geraldine beholds him in no other light than a censor, whose splenetic powers, hourly called forth, damps the face of joy, and destroys the reign of pleasure. Strange to say, Sunderland, the coxcomb I most despise, appears to possess, if not her love, at least the influence of persuasion; for he gratifies her vanity; and that, though my sister, is certainly her chief foible. We cannot be blind to the failings of those we love: we may pass them over in silence, but we cannot discredit the evidence of our senses: had Dauverne condescended to call in the aid of flattery, he might now reign her unrivalled favourite.”

“ Merciful powers!” ejaculated Antonia, in the astonishment of the moment—“ Resign the elegant, the amiable Dauverne, for the conceited, self-sufficient Sunderland! Can human nature be so blind? Can the

heart be so insensible to its own happiness ?”

She paused; she trembled at what she had said; she feared she had betrayed the state of her feelings; she feared her prepossession was no longer a secret, as she saw the eyes of her friend fixed intently on her: she raised her hand to conceal her blushes, and the carriage stopped at the gate of the Countess of Carberry.

CHAP. III.

"How is Mrs. Powersly?" questioned Lady Selina, as the Countess met them at the drawing-room door. "Very, very weak," she replied, in low accents—"unable, without assistance, to quit her chamber."

Antonia sighed; Selina shook her head. "She promises herself much pleasure," resumed the countess, "in the society of her young friends: indeed she frequently speaks of her little patriot," pressing the hand of Antonia, "whose powers for argument, she says, she must again call forth. Come," leading them to the couch on which the invalid reclined. "Mother," for her eyes were closed, "here are our compassionate friends!"

Mrs. Powersly feebly raised herself, took a hand of each, and welcomed them to Falmouth. "And how have you left the inhabitants and visitors at St. Antholine's?" inquired the countess. "Well," replied Selina, reading in her expressive countenance the drift of her allusion. "And very gay?" breathing a heavy sigh. "Can a party assembled to celebrate a wedding be otherwise than gay?" questioned Lady Selina. "Don't you know that Geraldine is on the eve of becoming a bride; and she is, you must acknowledge, the very goddess of gaiety and pleasure. Besides, the Duchess of Delaware is of the party; and her Grace is an avowed enemy to sadness." "And the duke?" said Mrs. Powersly. "Oh, no!" answered Selina, "that would be an effectual scare-crow to drive away his pretty mate: the gentle soul possesses so much sensibility, that she can't bear to witness the sufferings

of a husband ; and to save her susceptible feelings, she leaves his Grace at Beddingfield-house, and comes to St. Antholine's, to lament the trammels of that most detestable of all detestable ordinations, with which her friend is about to fetter herself." " Why, my dear Selina," said the countess, smiling, " how severe is your censure ! Indeed you must not learn to be satirical." " 'Tis all true, Cecilia, I assure you," returned her ladyship : " the duchess defies censure, is a staunch votary of *fashion*, laughs at the word *propriety*, despises *prudence*, fancies *diffidence* out of repute, and I fear goes even beyond the shaft of satire." " Oh, shocking, shocking !" interrupted the countess : " her levity is certainly unpardonable ; yet I cannot believe her so devoid of honour, so dead to gratitude, so lost to her own interest. Remember, she is very lovely, very much sought after, very much flattered ; and

ren; who lashes the tined pith-chaste
 and shocks the ear of the caste. It not
 with the plain mother of the off, it is
 e, in ten minutes my rahal rejoine-
 er learned more from my, "You can-
 no had heard in their mas cause your
 hea the less of Delaware to the slight-
 est breath of man and what would
 give thousands little concern, by you
 would be felt severely." "Heaven
 forbid that I should attempt defending
 such conduct!" said the countess.
 "My situation," and a pensive sadness
 stole over her features, "is peculiarly
 critical: the world licenses the tongue
 of slander to animadvert on the actions
 of the woman who is so unfortunate as
 to be deserted by her lawful protector;
 and——" "No, no, no," interrupted
 the distressed Selina; "the world is
 not so virulent. Do you know, my
 dear Madam," addressing Mrs. Pow-
 ersly, "Miss Forrester and myself,
 thanks to the awkwardness of her cha-

riotous husband; and to save her susceptible, benevolent feelings, she leaves his Grace's beautiful Longfield-house, and comes to Sir Stephen's, to lament the trammels of Charles's detestable of all detestable.

The manner with which her friend thanks at this herself." "What subject, and Lady Selina answered:—"How wonderful is the power of a pair of fine eyes! What execution do they perform—what fascination do they possess! A son of Neptune, who, like the uncurbed lion, laughs at danger, hears unappalled the roar of cannon, and the clash of elements, at last to be conquered by a timid, blushing girl—to resign at once his boasted liberty, and silently submit to his shackles. What unlimited power is ours," tapping Antonia on the shoulder, "if we knew but how to use it, we might bind the world in chains!" "The conqueror's dearest attribute is mercy," archly observed Antonia. "Pshaw!"

expressed; who lashes the tilled path forced
 gently shocks the ear of the stoutest ene-
 my. In the plain matter of the often lis-
 tening, in ten minutes, the whole Pen-
 rose learned more of her, "though
 I had heard in their days the fillet of
 love business of Delia, is she so very
 amiable?" "indeed she is every
 thing the heart can picture," rejoined
 Antonia, eager to proclaim the merit
 of her friend—"lovely, ingenuous, un-
 tinctured by prejudice, and alive to
 conviction; she is one of those rare
 beings, whom to see is to love, to know
 is to reverence." "And her father?"
 inquired the countess. "An honest,
 upright, liberal man," replied Lady
 Selina, nodding playfully to Antonia:
 "'tis my turn to speak; you have de-
 scribed the daughter, and I shall take
 upon myself the office of delineating
 the virtues of our excellent host. Jo-
 nathan Penrose is a quaker, to be sure;
 but that takes not from his goodness:

it is very kind ; and to save her susceptibility, she leaves his Grace, as he had been told, and comes to him to lament the trammels she smiled, and detested. “ In general, I wish which her friend religion which is herself.” “ Wish, and illiberal: *contracted*, because they mingle not in society, and, despising the polish of the world, confine themselves to their own narrow sphere: *selfish*, because their benefactions lean towards their own sect ; and *illiberal*, because they style the pursuits of others vanity. But our good friend is an exception to the general rule: nature has expanded his mind, and benevolence has stamped her image on his heart. He is a plain speaker ; but how much more to be prized is the unvarnished bluntness of merit than the sleek polish of *refinement*, veiling, in the guise of truth the sentiments of dissimulation ! He is a man who pays no respect to per-

sons; who lashes the tilled profligate, and shocks the ear of the fine lady with the plain matter of fact. I believe, in ten minutes, my mother and sister learned more from him than ever they had heard in their lives." "Was the Duchess of Delaware of the party?" inquired the countess. "Oh, no!" answered Selina: "if she had been, I do think she would have fainted; for he would have held up a mirror, in which she would have seen her own deformity." "She might not have started at the reflected image," said Lady Carberry; "for never did I see a more lovely woman." "Was her heart as perfect as her form," rejoined Lady Selina, "she would indeed have been an angelic being: but where 'tis all exterior, how insignificant appears the bauble! The poor duke gazed on her charms; and loved. Even now he fancies his Laura perfection; for he

may look at her, till with Othello he may exclaim

“ If she be false, heaven mocks itself.”

“ False !” repeated the countess. “ Selina, Selina ! this is a propensity I never before discovered. Is there any thing upon earth so dreadful, as unjustly to slur the fair temple of a woman’s fame ?” “ Yes, my dear friend,” rejoined her ladyship, “ erase the *un*, and methinks it is far more dreadful.” “ To the accused, certainly,” remarked Lady Carberry, “ but not the accuser.”

Antonia persevered in silence : she could in a moment have confirmed the suspicions of Selina ; but compassion restrained her—compassion for a being who showed none towards herself, who had violated every principle of duty, every sentiment of honour, and, with the most unblushing effrontery, fabri-

cated an ideal ghost, to screen her infamy, to elude disgrace. "I fear the picture is too justly drawn," said Mrs. Powersly: "the woman who can leave a debilitated suffering husband and infant family, to follow the pursuits of dissipation, lays herself open to the lash of censure, and the inferences of the world. Besides, her flagrant intimacy with a man of known intrigue—a man to whom she was attached when the dazzling title of duchess offered itself to her acceptance—is at least thoughtless and unjustifiable."

"Allowed," exclaimed her daughter; "but yet indiscretion reaches not to criminality." "Certainly not, my love," rejoined Mrs. Powersly; "but to parley with the foe, you know, is the first step to capitulation." "There is much to be said," resumed the countess, "and many excuses to be formed, for a young and inexperienced woman, raised, as she may be said to have been,

from obscurity to splendour. Remember she was scarce eighteen, captivatingly lovely, more like a creature of the poet's brain than an existing being, when she burst upon the world in all the blaze of rank, of novelty, and admiration. Every tongue dwelt upon the praise, and echoed the graces of the beautiful Duchess of Delaware. Can it be wondered, then, that her head should turn dizzy from the height from which she looked, and her heart forget its humility in new and fancied importance?" "And her gratitude?" questioned her young friend. "There I am silent," said the countess. "Her humanity, too?" pursued Lady Selina: "what, still silent? Her maternal feelings--not one word? Her——" "Hush! I find I must resign the contest," she replied, smiling: "even Miss Forrester will not be my auxiliary." "Nay, if you confess yourself vanquished," said Selina, "it is all, as a

generous conqueror, I can desire : but remember, Cecilia, **when next** you accuse me of satire, **have a firmer foundation for your support than charity.**”

At an early hour, Mrs. Powersly retired to rest ; and then, no longer restrained by the fear of distressing the feelings of a parent, the countess ventured to name the earl. “ Is not that a forbidden subject ? ” asked Lady Selina. “ Oh, no ! ” she replied, pensively smiling : “ my thoughts ever that way tend ; and sorrow, you know, dwells not in words.”

Antonia sighed : she gazed upon the interesting speaker until the tear of pity sprung to her eye, and her contempt for the ungrateful husband turned to detestation. “ It is an indulgence the heart covets,” continued Lady Carberry—“ an indulgence to which, in the presence of my enfeebled mother, I dare not yield.” “ I wish I could invest you with my spirit, Ceci-

lia," said Lady Selina. "Well, and what then?" "Why then," she replied, "you would snap the bonds of love, and throw the truant from your breast for ever." "It is easy to talk," said the countess, mildly. "And to act in anticipation," observed Antonia. "True," resumed Selina; "but sooner than submissively yield to such indignity, my pride would urge me to sting the offender, although——" "The passage lay through your own peace," interrupted the countess: "no, no, Selina; I know your heart better. There is not one, notwithstanding your boast of spirit, which would sooner break beneath unkindness: there is not one," and her voice faltered, "which would more acutely feel the horror of being considered by a husband—a bar to his pleasure, an encumbrance on his love. It is a dreadful change, from kindness, tenderness, affection, to indifference, neglect—nay, bare civility.

" Had it pleas'd heaven
 To try me with affliction ;
 Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips ;
 Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes ;
 I should have found in some part of my soul
 A drop of patience."

I should not have murmured, I should have been content to suffer, for the tenderness of my heart would not have been despised.—But to be detested, hated by the being my soul too fondly loves, oh, Selina !” and a flood of sorrow rushed to her eyes—“ *Patience, that young and rose-lipp’d cherubim, flies at the confirmation and leaves me to the pitiless fangs of despair.*” “ *My dear Cecilia,*” said Lady Selina, struggling to repel the air of sorrow which pervaded her countenance, “ if we see you thus you will drive us from Bristol, for instead of physicians to your spirits I find we are promoters of melancholy. Antonia already has caught the infection, and with such a

grief-worn face she will sorely assist in supporting the spirit of the masquerade." "The world whispers," continued Lady Carberry, regardless of the effort of her friend, "that pleasure is not the *sole* attraction at St. Antholine's." Antonia started. "Perhaps," she fearfully continued, "the siren I have been defending—" "Beware of jealousy!" interrupted Selina, rising with affected gaiety from her seat—

"It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth
mock

The meat it feeds on."

"I think," turning to Antonia, "Othello is one of the finest tragedies ever produced by the pen of the immortal Shakespeare. The character throughout is so admirably sustained, so descriptive of magnanimity, artlessness, credulity, affection and revenge, that the very life speaks in the scenes, proclaiming the power of treachery and

the weakness of human fore-sight. The means by which Iago works on the feelings of the Moor, his gradual progress towards the conviction of his senses, his malignancy, his unbending hatred and determined perseverance fill with detestation and regret the mind of the reader, while the elegant simplicity, the conscious innocence of Desdemona awakens the heart to pity and admiration." "You are an admirer of the drama," observed Antonia. "I am quite enthusiastically devoted to Shakespeare," she replied, smiling at the force of her expression. "Once, at a private theatre, in conformity to the request of Lord Carberry, I performed the character of 'Juliet,'" said the countess, with a deep sigh. "It was a few weeks before we were married, and then, I believe, not for Idalia's goddess would my Romeo have exchanged me." "I remember it well," rejoined Lady Selina; "had you been

less timid, Cecilia, you would have personated the daughter of Capulet most admirably. It is a pretty love-sick tale affectingly pourtrayed ; some scruple not to affirm it is a *chef-d'œuvre*—but give me Othello.”

On the third morning of their visit at Falmouth, as Antonia sat alone in the drawing-room, the door was suddenly thrown open and Lord Carberry entered. She started, and with a look expressive of her feelings welcomed the earl to the residence of his countess. “ Upon my honour, divine Miss Forrester,” exclaimed his lordship, “ if you attribute my appearance to any other cause than yourself you do me injustice. St. Antholine’s has become so confounded stupid since you withdrew yourself from us that it requires more stoicism than dame Nature has awarded to my share to reconcile myself to the desertion.” “ I am sorry, my lord, your actions have no better

motive," said Antonia, gravely. " I had hoped this visit portended more than mere compliment." " Compliment," reproachfully repeated the earl, " how cold the term ! Can there exist a better motive than following in humble adoration the steps of perfection ?" " Yes," she coldly replied, " the dictates of humanity." " Do you then condescend to set me the example, adorable Antonia," and he snatched her reluctant hand, " by smiling on the most devoted of your slaves." " My lord," she said, indignantly rising, " I had hoped a *recent* occurrence at St. Antholine's would have effectually checked a conduct which can create only my detestation and contempt—a conduct which neither delicacy, propriety, or honour can authorize—a conduct which but for the respect I entertain for the amiable injured Countess of Carberry should now be publicly exposed to the world."

“ The very efforts of displeasure serve but to fan the flame,” he rejoined, gazing on her glowing features ; “ each moment you rise higher in my estimation—at first I worshipped your form, now I idolize your sentiments. Unfortunate enthrallment !—mistaken prepossession ! Never till my eyes beheld you had my heart imbibed love’s passion ; never——” “ Beware, beware,” interrupted the horror-struck Antonia, forcibly withdrawing her hand, “ lest anger should surmount every other sentiment, and urge me to reveal this insult ; provoke me no longer, for know that there exists not a being whom my soul so truly despises. If not the dread of offending me I had erroneously relied on the interference of Mr. Dauverne, who——” “ Mr. Dauverne,” exclaimed the impetuous earl, “ would not be thus scorned—Ah ! you blush.” “ It is for you,” said the distressed and mortified girl ;

“ A cold, senseless, phlegmatic stoic ! ” rejoined Carberry, “ I despise his interference ; if he will fight, why let him.” The so lately flushed cheek of Antonia turned pale as death, and her lips quivered with agitation and alarm. “ If my heart could be torn from my bosom,” he continued, “ your image, Miss Forrester, would be found stamped deeply, eternally upon it. You are agitated,” perceiving her eyes fill with tears as she leant against a chair for support. “ My pride and my feelings are both wounded,” she answered, haughtily. “ You wish to withdraw—to leave me.” “ I do, my lord.” “ Promise again to pardon, again to forget my impetuosity,” he implored, “ and never more will I offend.” “ Your lordship’s future conduct must decide,” she replied, eager to escape. “ Go then, Miss Forrester, and I will return to St. Antholine’s.” “ Not without seeing the countess,” said

Antonia, pausing at the door and turning fearfully round. "Oh, my Lord!" and she forgot her own injuries in the sorrows of her friend, "let me implore you, at least, to pay her feelings the poor tribute of attention." "Think the violence you offer my heart, Miss Forrester," mournfully replied the earl; "to behold in the same instant the object to whom it is devoted, and the sole bar to the realization of its felicity." "Not the *sole bar*," repeated Antonia, with a degree of pride she could not restrain. "The existing bar then," rejoined Carberry. "Think of her virtues," she resumed, heedless of his remark; "think of your former love; think of the trials which await her.—" "What trials?" questioned the earl. "The gradual decline of an adored, an only surviving parent, and the torturing prospect of her speedy dissolution," said Antonia. "Is Mr. Powersly so ill then?" asked Carberry.

"Stay and see her, my lord," she replied, "and then you will cease to doubt. See the ruins of health, the wreck of beauty, the last dying efforts of cheerfulness—think of a parent's feelings and sooth her last moments with returning affection for her child." "You are a most admirable pleader," said the earl, smiling. "Pity," rejoined Antonia, "that the cause of humanity should require a pleader." "In such a form it must ever reach the heart," he exclaimed. "Ah! have I conquered?" said the delighted girl—"may I be the harbinger of peace to the dejected Cecilia?" "The pleader, not the plea, I would insinuate," answered Carberry.

Antonia cast on him a look of silent reproach and turned to the door—it opened, and the countess, leaning on the arm of Lady Selina, entered the apartment. An exclamation of joy escaped her; she forgot the neglect,

the slights she had received; she remembered only the husband of her affection, whose return filled her careworn breast with happiness. "Welcome, my dearest Carberry!" she exclaimed, and she raised his passive hand to her lips and hailed him with a smile of the sweetest rapture.

Taken off his guard he knew not how to act; he internally cursed the interruption, wished himself at St. Antholine's, in London, nay any where but at Falmouth—his heart, not altogether hardened, smote him for what had passed, and, even in compliance with gallantry, he would have returned the salutation, when his eyes unfortunately rested on Antonia, and the impulse vanished. The countess trembled—her countenance alternately changed from red to white—she knew not how to act—she dreaded lest tenderness had offended, and her heart refused reserve. "Your ladyship

has a pleasant view from this window," at length uttered the unabashed earl, perceiving her agitation, and turning carelessly away. Tears started to the eyes of Lady Carberry. "Very pleasant," she attempted to articulate, but her voice faltered. "Strangers generally think so," said Lady Selina, recovering from the surprise which this unexpected visit had occasioned, and internally condemning his want of feeling and pitying her agitated friend. "But your lordship, a true prototype of human nature, generally turns to the left, or long ere now you would have acknowledged its merit." "I don't in the least understand your ladyship's allusion," he replied. "Indeed, shall I explain?" "As you please." "Why I mean," rejoined Selina, "that there are always two paths to pursue—the left the dictates of fashion, folly, and impropriety; the right honour, prudence, and com-

mon sense. Now the allegory lies here—instead of turning to the right, and hastening to see this *fair prospect*,” and her eyes glanced towards the distressed Cecilia, “your lordship has preserved a retrograde motion, and uniformly taken the path diametrically opposite.” “This figurative style,” exclaimed the earl, burying his chagrin beneath a forced laugh, “is too refined for my common-place capacity.” “Why then in plain English,” resumed Lady Selina, “for perhaps your lordship *will* understand *that*, why has your visit to Falmouth been so protracted?” “Hush, hush, Selina!” said the countess, in imploring accents—“I dare say my lord has sufficient reasons for his actions.” “That’s right, Cecilia,” he replied, nodding most graciously; “’pon my soul my reasons were very cogent!” Lady Carberry faintly smiled, and the earl proceeded—“We have had such

gay doings at St. Antholine's that I could not possibly come sooner. Bravenger and a whole host of the *haut ton* have joined us; and last night, under the auspices of the elegant Lady Geraldine, the prettiest, most compact little theatre you ever saw, opened with the comedy of John Bull. Her Grace of Delaware made a most admirable Lady Caroline Barymore; and Mary Thornberry lost none of her sweetness in being personated by the bride elect. Sunderland played Tom Shuffleton to the very life; and I struggled for pre-eminence in Frank Rochdale. Every one appeared quite happy except Dauverne, and by heaven!" laughing, "his face looks as though he had been twelve months soured with matrimonial discord. Did you ever see any thing like him, Lady Selina?" "Oh, yes! often. I remember before you married, or rather before you gained the decisive answer, you looked quite as

miserable." "There's some hope for him then," rejoined the earl. "I'll tell him his fair cousin says matrimony's an effectual cure for the dismal—perhaps he'll take the fatal leap with more glee." "Nay, tell him what you please," replied Selina, "but to a certainty your lessons won't corrupt, for he has too much principle ever to take a leaf out of the same book."

The earl smiled ironically, and turning abruptly exclaimed:—"Do you know they want me to write a farce; now, if you will permit me to name your ladyship, I know no one so capable of fulfilling the office." "If I embark in that arduous undertaking," she answered, archly, "I will call it *Nobility run Mad*, and make the Earl of Carberry hero of the tale." "And pray in what garb may you deck your own semblance?" he inquired. "In the most obnoxious to a fashionable man," retorted Selina, laughing—"a

dealer of truth." "I fear you will meet with some difficulty in casting the characters," observed Antonia, who till now had been a silent hearer. "Oh, no! I shall not," she replied, "for people are so blind to their own deformity, that though I should paint them as glaring as the sun at noon day yet will they not know themselves." "And pray when may this said piece be ready for representation?" asked his lordship. "When you feel inclined to realize a sober, steady, domestic character," said Selina. "What part may be awarded to Miss Forrester?" "Your lordship already knows," exclaimed Antonia, "that I never play." "Nay, the powers of persuasion," rejoined Lord Carberry, "have, ere now, destroyed resolutions as firmly formed." "Indeed I must confess," said Lady Selina, "Miss Forrester's talents are not for the drama; she would make such another poor, trembling, terrified

heroine as you did, Cecilia," addressing the countess, "when, to oblige Lord Carberry, you took the part of Juliet." "Faith! I remember it well," exclaimed the earl. "If Romeo had not had a wonderful deal of spirit and perseverance, he absolutely would have been distanced." "And add *affection*, my lord," faintly articulated the countess. "Affection," repeated the fashionable husband, forcing a laugh, "nonsense, Cecilia, you must have been dreaming; affection is such a trite term." "Would I could dream for ever then!" murmured Lady Carberry, and she closed her wish with a heavy sigh. "Well, good morning," rising to depart. "What, so soon?" she fearfully interrogated, "will you not stay and dine with us?" "With all the pleasure in life I would accept your ladyship's invitation," replied the earl, "for it is not in nature to resist so sweet a trio," bowing, "but unfortu-

nately I have engaged myself as umpire between Westbrook and Sunderland, and if I am not present the bet cannot be decided." "Under what conditions is it formed?" questioned Lady Selina. "A pitched battle? or——" "No, a race, a race," interrupted his lordship. "Two famous pedestrians indeed!" she rejoined, laughing; "why Mr. Sunderland will absolutely expire under the fatigue." "Not pedestrians, but equestrians," resumed the earl, "and ten thousand to one in favour of Sunderland's gaining the day, for he rides his own *Briton* against Westbrook's *Buonaparte*." "Oh! then it is a decided thing," exclaimed Lady Selina; "I only wonder the viscount can have the presumption to oppose him." "Good bye!" said Carberry, nodding as he looked up at the window, "good bye!" for already had he vaulted into his saddle, but suddenly checking his prancing

steed—"Remember the farce, Lady Selina," he exclaimed. "Oh, yes, my lord!" archly replied her ladyship, "and the *hero* too." Again he touched his hat, and, followed by his grooms, galloped towards St. Antholine's. "I fear," said the countess, and tears started to her eyes, "his faithless heart is alienated for ever—I fear I shall never again reign the envied mistress of his affections." "Patience, patience, Cecilia!" exclaimed Lady Selina: "trust me, if I thought the drop reached beyond the surface I should not take such pains to lash his follies. You know I have always prophesied, and I still persist in the assertion, that he will yet be laughed out of his errors, that your gentleness will effectually reclaim him." Her friend shook her head. Antonia remained silent; she could not second the ideas of Lady Selina, for she considered Lord Carberry a libertine, as devoid

of principle as he was of feeling. "You are more than usually debilitated, my dearest mother," observed the countess, as Mrs. Powersly in the evening, pale and exhausted, reclined her head on the arms of the sofa. "I fear you are worse; do let me send for further advice; I fear the air of Falmouth answers not the destined end." "Oh yes, my love, it does," replied the invalid, serenely smiling; "it answers the end I had ever pictured." "What do you mean?" fearfully interrogated her distressed daughter. "I mean, my beloved Cecilia," taking her hand and feebly pressing it, "that human aid cannot check the progress of distaste, or repair the ravages of a broken constitution." The countess sobbed. "It is wrong to fill you with false hopes, my dear child," continued Mrs. Powersly; "I feel that in this world I can sojourn but a short time longer, yet I leave you

not 'comfortless—widowed, though a wife, you have many resources which thousands cannot claim; unabating and ceaseless in the silent approbation of conscience, in the affection of an attached brother, and in the friendship of two," looking gratefully at Lady Selina and Antonia, "whose countenances declare they will comfort the mourner." Our heroine could not speak; while Lady Selina, checking the rising emotion which nearly prevented utterance, exclaimed—"Your words are dictated by depressed spirits; indeed, my dear madam, we all hope much is to be done for you." Mrs. Powersly shook her head and sighed. "Ah! do not hope, do not even wish to recal me to a world which, pardon me heaven if it is presumptuous, I feel prepared to quit. Perhaps a few years hence I might be less so. Gradually has the ties of the world been snapped — gradually have I been

weaned from its allurements ; but the Being who, for wise and secret purposes, visited me with affliction gave my soul support to endure its trials. Perhaps it may be days, weeks, nay even months, before I am called hence and am no more seen ; for the disease under which I linger is deceitful. Perhaps I may yet behold my beloved Charles," and a glow of pleasure illuminated her languid eye, " may implore him, as I do you, Cecilia, rather to rejoice than regret. From you, my children, for I speak as though my son were with me, have I, since the death of your father, gleaned my slender stock of happiness ; your dutiful affection has been my chief delight, and even now I recollect with rapture a thousand nameless instances, dear, infinitely dear to the maternal heart."

" Oh, my mother !" articulated the countess, hiding her agitated countenance on the bosom of Lady Selina.

Antonia seized her hand; through her tears she stole a glance at Mrs. Powersly, whose features, sallowed by sickness, wore yet the stamp of unabated fortitude. As she gazed upon her daughter an air of melancholy, awakened by witnessing her affliction, succeeded, but it was momentary: with an immediate effort she mildly reproved her grief, and turning with a resumed smile to Lady Selina and Antonia—

“Your pardon, my young friends,” she said, in a low voice, “I have distressed your feelings; do not weep;—though tottering on the brink of another world I have all to hope, nothing to fear. Your friendship will prove a healing balm to my poor suffering Cecilia; and the power who restored the prodigal to his father’s arms may yet awaken remorse in the heart of her husband—may yet instigate it to reparation. Good-night!”

And she attempted to rise, but feeling

her weakness she clung to the arm of Antonia, and supported on the other side by her daughter, slowly retired to her own apartment.

In the morning, each alike impressed with the mournful tenor of the evening's discourse, met in the breakfast room. The colourless cheeks and swollen eyes of Lady Carberry proclaimed, that during the salutary hours of repose, sleep had not visited her pillow, or forgetfulness poured down its balm upon her. Ah, no! the live-long night had been passed in prayer, if not to avert the threatened blow, at least to obtain fortitude, in that stern, relentless, riving mandate, which severs from the filial breast the revered guide of its youth—the beloved friend of its riper years—the tender, the attached, the anxious parent. Dreadful is the stroke of death! Dreadful, the cold, deep, unbroken stillness, which in a moment succeeds the ardour of

affection, the vigour of life, the zest for happiness—which marbles the features, once glowing with social warmth and animating conviviality—which enervates and stiffens the arm, which, even in the painful task of correction, sacrificed to the welfare of its offspring the acute sensibility of nature ! Ah, God ! the heart which has sustained the shock can alone acknowledge the reality—can alone, with me, affirm, that penury, disease, affliction, is comparative bliss to the horror of that awful moment ! Long and reiterated was the cannonade echoing along the chalky cliffs : long had the sun been hid, as though terrified at the sight of carnage : every heart beat with expectancy and dread ; for the continued roar portended a distant action. “ Heaven protect my brother ! ” ejaculated the countess, fervently clasping her hands.

“ Oh ! if engaged, shield him

from danger ! Let the whizzing balls, laden with destruction, fall harmless around his head ! Let the justice of his cause speak in his unsheathed sword ! Let victory crown him with immortal laurels !” “ You rack yourself with false fears,” said Lady Selina ; “ a heart like yours, my dear Cecilia, can never partake of peace.” “ False fears !” she repeated, starting at a renewed discharge—“ gracious Father ! may he not at this moment be expiring ?” “ And may he not,” inquired Antonia, “ be far removed from the present danger ?”

The countess replied not, but with quick and agitated steps continued to pace the breakfast-room. Mrs. Powersly heard it not : a deep sleep hung upon her eye-lids, and rocked the exhausted embers of debilitated nature. Unconscious of alarm, or even of anxiety, she seemed to dream of happi-

ness for ever and anon, when her daughter softly drew aside the curtains of her bed. A smile, serene and saint-like, hovered around her mouth, irradiating the external features with the peace that reigned within.

Suddenly an unbroken stillness prevailed: the firing had ceased; the instruments of death no longer played. It was like the awful calm which succeeds a storm, when nature appears to droop for the havoc that's been made: it was the mournful shadow which damps the joy of conquest; for it was the period when humanity waters with tears the bier of heroes. Mrs. Power-
sly awoke, and, as the clock struck two, entered the drawing-room. The buzz of voices bespoke some gathering bustle; and, as the invalid reclined upon the sofa, loud shouts and acclamations resounded through the streets.

"Victory! victory! victory!" was distinctly heard; and then the ringing of bells and the discharge of musketry deadened every lesser sound.

"What can be the matter?" questioned the enfeebled Mrs. Powersly, as Antonia approached the window—"surely some great and mighty achievement is accomplished. It was on this day," and she raised her clasped hands to heaven, "Britain mourned the death of a hero! This is the anniversary," and she gazed tenderly on her daughter, "which closed on you an orphan, and me a widow."

Louder and louder grew the tumult. "Huzza! huzza! huzza!" was vociferated by the populace. The countess approached the bell, when the door was thrown open, and the butler, breathless with joyful intelligence, entered.

"Captain Powersly, my lady——"

He stopt. The countess, pale and agitated, sunk on the shoulder of Lady Selina, while Mrs. Powersly, with a faint shriek, articulated: "My son! ah, God! what of my son?" "Is—" "What? what?" implored the nearly frantic mother. "Do not be alarmed, Madam," exclaimed the butler—"Captain Powersly is now towing into the harbour a French vessel twice the size of the frigate he commands."

"All-seeing Providence, I thank thee!" ejaculated the heroic mother—"My boy treads in the steps of his father—my boy is worthy to be called Powersly! O, fame! crown him with thy laurels! Virtue——"

Nature could no more: the last slender ligament of frail mortality was broken—the pulse no longer ebbed—the blood no longer flowed. The countess, in the closed eye, the ghastly visage, saw the dreadful change. She sprung

forward : she clasped her in a last embrace ; and then, powerless and subdued, sank with her departed parent in her arms.

CHAP. IV.

Long did the Countess of Carberry continue insensible: long did she baffle the skill of a physician and the efforts of affection. The corse of the departed Mrs. Powersly was removed from the apartment ere her heart began to beat: and even then the revival was but transient, for she relapsed from fainting to fainting, until nature seemed to shrink beneath the fearful conflict.

Lady Selina and Antonia watched in anxious dread by the side of the mourner, nor quitted their station, save when the bursting anguish of their full hearts refused controul—when the tears and sobs of commiseration could

no longer be repressed. In the evening she became more collected, spoke of her deceased mother, revised the sad scene of the morning, and lightened her tortured bosom with floods of unavailing sorrow. Her lamentations were unchecked; for the being for whom she would have restrained them was now beyond the reach of every hopeless wish, of every agonizing pang. The voice of affection could not awaken her from her slumber: the plaint of anguish could not disturb her repose. But though the mind may feel ever watchful, yet the organization of the body becomes exhausted; the over-stretched nerves require relaxation; and sleep, the nurse of nature, pours alike on the happy, the prosperous, the mourner, and the prisoner, hours of oblivious tranquillity—hours which to the former prolong, in the vivid flights of imagination, the fleeting moments of enjoyment; to the

dour of friendship? The melancholy preparations for the interment of a beloved parent would be too much! Hark!" springing from her chair at a loud rap at the street-door, "here is some inquirer, possibly Captain Powersly." She paused not a moment, fearful of the sad tidings being too abruptly conveyed, but flew down the stairs and entered the hall, at the moment a footman threw open the door. It was indeed Captain Powersly! She raised her hand as a signal of silence to the servant, for the first question was, "Where is my mother?" "Up stairs," replied Lady Selina, struggling for composure. "Oh, Lady Selina Dauverne!" he exclaimed, extending his left hand, for his right hung in a sling, "I expected not so fair a porter: how is my mother?" "Happy." "She has heard then of our success?" "Yes, she heard of it." "I am come on shore purposely to convince

her of ~~my~~ safety," pursued the hero; "I know so well her anxious heart, even now it is filled with alarm for her son." Lady Selina mournfully shook her head. "But your arm, Captain Powersly," as her eyes rested on the sling. "O! a mere scratch, a mere nothing. Where is Cecilia?" "Your sister is ill," she answered, entering the drawing-room.

Antonia arose; Powersly started, he bowed politely, and again addressing Lady Selina:—"I fear there is more than you wish to reveal! Ah, you weep! Is Cecilia in danger?—am I come to lose my sister?" "Heaven forbid! I hope not.—But your mother——" "What of my mother?" he exclaimed, as a melancholy foreboding overspread his countenance—"tell me," and he grasped her hand, "tell me, what of my mother?" "She has long been ill," murmured Selina, "long been declining—she is

now——” “Dying,” interrupted the tortured Powersly. “No, not dying, but——” “Dead,” he groaned, sinking on a chair, and covering his face with his spread hand. Selina answered not: long was the silence. “Ah, fatal, fatal confirmation!” he at length articulated; “no mother to welcome my return—no mother to smile on my hardships. Unhappy Cecilia! poor unfortunate, neglected sister! But where is she? let me see her—let me press the mourner to my heart—let us together lament our calamity—let us together deplore our unequalled loss.” “The countess now lulls her sorrows in a balmy slumber,” said Lady Selina; “Miss Forrester and myself stole unperceived from her side, fearful of shortening the transient period of forgetfulness.” “Heavy has been her trials!” solemnly exclaimed Captain Powersly. “She has witnessed the last struggles

of a beloved parent ; she has seen the gradual decay of strength and nature—perhaps the ineffectual throes of anguish!—perhaps the heart-piercing shrieks of excruciating pain! Ah God!” and he paced the room in an agony not to be described. “ Harrow not your mind with a picture so dreadful,” said the sympathizing Antonia, “ Lady Carberry witnessed no struggles ; serene as her mind was the hour of dissolution, for Mrs. Powersly died as she has ever lived—a pattern of fortitude and piety.” Powersly snatched the hand of the comforter, raised it to his lips, and burst into tears. “ But may I not, before I go, for in another hour I must return to my station, may I not,” and he struggled with his feelings, “ see all that remains of my revered mother ?” “ Certainly,” said Lady Selina, leading from the drawing-room.

Powersly paused at the door of the

chamber which contained the body ; a sickening sensation pressed upon his heart, and dimmed his eyes with a vertiginous film. Alas ! if to an indifferent spectator the sight of death is awfully appalling, what must it have been to the filial mind, returning with hope and pleasure to pour forth the tale of victory, and receive the blest meed of praise, approbation, and affection—to find the lips closed and the heart cold—to find, instead of the animated, eager rapture of welcome, the dreary appendages of the grave, the sad, the woful emblems of mortality ! Powersly, who feared not the cannon's roar or the tempest's fury ; who feared not the trebled numbers of the foe, or the loud boast of vain defiance ; who, in the hour of exigence, never lost his self command, or, in the shout of conquest, forgot his humility—Powersly, trembling, confessed the force of nature, and clung even to a weak and

agitated girl for support. His arm rested on the shoulder of Lady Selina—his eyes on heaven.

With unspeakable anguish he gazed on those features which a few hours before saw animated with expression, beaming with maternal tenderness; now, calm and still, serene and smiling, marbled by the hand of death; and when no longer able to contend with the heavy weight of accumulated sorrow he rushed from the chamber, and as he crossed the passage thought of his sister, and ineffectually strove to stifle his sobs.

Alas! in the hour of distress what sound is so consonant to our feelings as lamentations?—what sight so pleasing to our eyes as tears? Lady Carberry had already awakened; she started, she listened—“My mother! my tender, exemplary mother!” in broken agitated accents she heard pronounced. It could be no other than

her orphaned brother, her friend, her protector, her beloved Charles; she loudly called upon his name, she would have thrown herself from the bed, but her attendants restrained her: in a moment he was in the room—in a moment she was in his arms. Sad and impressive was the scene, for the tears which greeted the meeting were the sacred tributes of spontaneous affection, and flowed like the attribute of pity embalming the shrine of sorrow.

Quick did the envious minutes pass, for Captain Powersly in one short hour was to return to his station. Ah, how different to what his filial heart had pictured! “My blessed, sainted mother!” he exclaimed, as tears of regret and anguish rose to his eyes. “I must away, my sister, my poor deserted Cecilia; duty struggles with affection,” and he kissed the pale cheek of the suffering countess. “I must quit the corse of a mother to

attend the call of honour—of such a mother, so good, so tender ! Ah God !” and an hysteric sob checked utterance. “ Farewel ! farewel !” He snatched the hand of Lady Selina, the hand of Antonia, eagerly pressed them and hurried from the chamber.

Fashion guided not the conduct of Lady Carberry ; she did not fly from the house, because it contained the remains of a parent—she did not shudder at the sight of death, for the tyrant, whose very name unnerves the delicate system of a *finelady*, to the heart of true affection presents nothing terrifying. She did not shriek, she did not tear her hair, neither by extravagant exclamations did she seek to proclaim her sorrow. No, her's was the deep, the heartfelt grief which requires not the aid of language—the grief which mourns the chastening, but accuses not the chastener.

In one week, followed by an at-

tached son, Mrs. Powersly was laid in the silent tomb; and the following morning, taking an affectionate leave of her young friends, the Countess of Carberry and her household quitted Falmouth. St. Antholine's, as the earl had mentioned, was completely crowded with guests; and Lady Selina and Antonia, on alighting from the chariot, were greeted by a whole group of new arrivals. "O! so you're come home," exclaimed Lady Geraldine; "well, 'tis lucky; I'm glad of it, for to-night we perform the 'Chapter of Accidents.'" Antonia shuddered, her eyes rested on her mourning robe, and she turned in disgust from the speaker. "You are glad of it," reproachfully repeated Lady Selina, "surely, had you missed our society, you would have visited Falmouth." "Mist, by Jupiter!" vociferated Sunderland. "Hurt at the conduct of a sister, if you please,

Mr. Sunderland," rejoined her ladyship, proudly, "though *mift* is a term which my dictionary will not explain." "Then its author is a blockhead," replied Sunderland, "and knows not his own language." "Go you, improve upon a Johnson," said Lady Selina, ironically, "and be sure and give a correct explanation of the word *folly*."

Lady Geraldine laughed, held up her glass and quizzed the beau; while the Duchess of Delaware, laying her hand upon his arm, exclaimed—"Put my name down for twenty copies of *Sunderland's Dictionary*; and, if you want a dedication, I will graciously condescend to patronize the efforts of genius." "Perhaps your ladyship," addressing Selina, "will give me a helping hand in this arduous undertaking," said *Narcissus*; "perhaps," with a smile of exultation, "you will express *ill-nature*." "Not so accu-

rately as *contempt*," she retorted.
 " Defeated! defeated! defeated!"
 echoed from every mouth; while Sunder-
 land, muttering something of female
 sharpness, whispered in the ear of Lady
 Geraldine. " I'll tell," exclaimed
 her ladyship, gaily. "'Pon my ho-
 nour if you do," he replied, taking her
 hand with an air of tender languor,
 " I'll burn my pen!" " Would the
 world miss it?" questioned her Grace
 of Delaware. " Full as much as it
 would the author," observed Lady
 Selina. Sunderland forced a smile and
 bowed, while Lady Geraldine affect-
 edly drawled—" Well, but Selina,
 what enormous act have I committed
 to incur the heavy weight of your dis-
 pleasure?" " My displeasure is out
 of the question," replied Selina, " I
 was hurt, my dear sister, not at what
 you have done, but at what you have
 not done." " Why really, child,"
 extending her hand, " I wish to be

friends; but how could I go? even the marchioness has been too much engaged to admit of her visiting Falmouth, and really, to acknowledge the truth, I thought of everything but *death*, and that is a speculation," glancing casually at their sable garments, "only suitable to old women." "Upon my soul!" exclaimed Lord Westbrook, gazing on Antonia, "I never saw anything so dazzling as the contrast between snow and jet." "Is it possible that you can admire sable?" lisped the duchess. "I protest, the very sight of it gives me the horrors." Lady Selina bowed. "Mr. Bravenger," pursued her grace, turning carelessly away, "so you really think the other evening I filled the character of Belyidera very respectably?" "Respectably!" repeated Bravenger: "your grace does not do justice to your theatrical powers—a Siddons could not have surpassed you."

“ There is a great deal in *feeling* the character,” archly observed Lady Geraldine; “ Lord Westbrook was at home in Jaffier.” “ Love scenes ought to be delineated delicately, or the effect is lost,” said the viscount. The duchess sweetly smiled. “ Though may I perish,” he continued, addressing Antonia in a low voice, “ if I would not pledge a regalia for the privilege of making choice of a *Belvidera*!” Antonia answered not, her cheeks flushed crimson, and her eyes sought the ground, for at the moment Dauverne joined them. He singled her from the group, and as he welcomed her return to St. Antholine’s the animated expression of her features betrayed more than common interest. “ Where is Lord Carberry?” inquired Lady Geraldine, glancing significantly at Sunderland, “ have you lost him by the way? or, perhaps,” sarcastically, “ this agreeable surprise has

obliterated all lesser circumstances." Antonia trembled—Dauverne saw her agitation, and with unusual severity replied—"The return of Selina and Miss Forrester I perceive with pleasure; but the most agreeable surprise, believe me, will result from the knowledge of your ladyship having exchanged *irony* for *feeling*." "Nay, my good cousin," she rejoined, with the most perfect indifference, "set me the example by becoming less saturnine and more gallant." "How few, most charming, most lovely, most adorable Geraldine," whispered Sunderland, "would like you receive such marked disrespect with unabating good humour! I verily believe," and he took her hand and gently pressed it, "it is out of the power of man to disturb the sweet serenity of your ladyship's disposition. Happy, envied being," he continued, sighing, "who in such a breast can awaken interest!"

" Lord ! Mr. Sunderland," withdrawing her hand with affected diffidence, " you are so eccentric, so——" " Elegant creature !" interrupted the beau. " One would suppose you were speaking of a horse," said the duchess, laughing, " really, your ideas are amazingly singular." " Not in the present instance," replied Sunderland, and again he languidly turned his eyes on Lady Geraldine.

The duchess contemptuously smiled, while Lord Westbrook, addressing Dauverne, exclaimed—" What is become of Carberry?" " Gone with Arkerman and Glendenning to Falmouth," he replied. " Faith ! now I remember" said Sunderland, starting from his chair, " old—old—what a confounded head ! old — what's his name's stud is to be viewed to-day, previous to its going to town. " The devil it is," interrupted Westbrook, " and I not there." " Stop, stop,"

exclaimed Bravenger. "Must go, tell you I can't," replied the viscount; "Sweepstake, Rugantino, and Kill-devil are among the list." "Let us all go," proposed the duchess, passing her arm through Lady Geraldine's, "and while the gentlemen are examining the *elegant creatures* we will amuse ourselves as well as we can." "By heaven! a good motion," exclaimed Sunderland, "though may I perish if the world's attraction can draw me from the present circle." "Lady Selina and Miss Forrester will perhaps join our party," said Mr. Bravenger. "Oh, impossible!" lisped the duchess, "the pursuit is too trivial." "Pardon me," rejoined Bravenger, "but were it ten times more trivial the innate wish to oblige would magnify it into consequence." "I assure you," said Lady Selina, "the pursuit has no influence in our declining to-day a *second* visit to Falmouth." "How

can I find words to apologize for the indelicacy of the request?" resumed Bravenger; "yet from your ladyship's and Miss Forrester's mercy, I must sue for an acquittal, when I declare, upon my honour, that the transaction of yesterday was at the moment obliterated."

The two young friends bowed, while the Duchess of Delaware, impatient of delay, exclaimed: "Do, for pity's sake, come, Mr. Bravenger; or really the viscount will have reached Falmouth before we have quitted St. Antholine's." "This morning," said Dauverne, as soon as the party were beyond the reach of hearing, "I received intelligence from our friends at the vicarage." "How is the good doctor and Mrs. Moreland?" eagerly questioned Antonia. "And Stanley and Ellen?" interrupted Lady Selina. "And dear Percival and Rosa?" concluded our heroine. "All well," re-

plied Dauverne, smiling at their warmth : " but here is one also for you, Miss Forrester," holding forth a letter : " Mrs. Moreland wishes, under her own hand, to assure you that absence lessens not affection."

Antonia impatiently seized it, and, while Lady Selina sought the marquis and marchioness, retired to her dressing-room, and broke the seal. Mrs. Moreland spoke of her husband and children ; spoke of the restored vivacity of Sir Frederic Stanley, and the pleasure which his visit had occasioned ; expressed regret at the absence of her amiable young favourite, and the pleasing anticipation of her return ; told her many anecdotes of her little friends, and convinced her, by many kind energetic messages, that their love was undiminished. Percival had begun learning to write, and only wished he had reached joined letters, to be able to tell dear Miss Forrester how

much he longed to see her... "I tremble for the health of poor Mary," wrote Mrs. Moreland: "Remorse, shame, and sorrow, prey on her spirits, and undermine her strength; while the unfortunate William displays a lesson of fortitude and forgiving mercy rarely to be met with. The Christian slumbered in the father when the tale was first unfolded: affecting was the scene: would that the unknown betrayer had been a witness! Poor William, half distracted, cursed the seducer of his child, and shed tears of bitterness and anguish. 'Would'st thou had died, Mary,' he articulated, 'ere thou had crowned with shame the grey hairs of thy father! Would'st thou had died in innocence; for then I could have blessed thee!'

"Mary burst into the chamber as he uttered the last sentence, and, pale, trembling, and dismayed, sunk sobbing at his feet. 'My father!' she mur-

mured. 'My poor, deluded, unhappy child!' escaped from the lips of the agonized parent. He turned from her; she grasped his hand, and eagerly kissed it. 'Oh, those tears, those tears!' she articulated. 'Do not weep; I am unworthy of such tenderness; spurn me from your sight for ever, but do not weep!' 'I weep for a poor man's treasure,' exclaimed William, gazing on her with wounded pride and struggling affection: 'the rich may lose their gold, their possessions; but we who have only innocence, to rob us of that is dreadful. The highwayman who takes the purse of the traveller is hung; but an affluent villain may with impunity steal into the confidence of a too-credulous girl, and rob her of honour. Oh, curse him! curse him!' Mary fainted; and the unhappy William, hanging over her, deplored his warmth. The unfortunate girl continues to dwell

with her father," concluded Mrs. Moreland; "carefully does she! shun all intercourse with former associates and in solitude seeks to conceal from the eyes of the world her too apparent situation. Such is ever the consequence of misconduct! such the effects of vice on a mind habitually virtuous! It may for a moment sway, it may for a moment blind the inexperienced with the glare of false splendour, which, like the luminous exhalations of the earth, leading the too-credulous traveller from the point of destination, entangles him in labyrinths and difficulties, which neither human strength nor human foresight can surmount."

"Poor Mary!" sighed Antonia, wiping a tear from her cheek—"unhappy victim of man's treachery and woman's credulity! Surely there exists not a vice more black than the betrayer of innocence: surely the being who has blasted the hopes of honest William

can never feel peace!" She knew not, that, with many like transactions, it would pass down the stream of fashionable occurrences, and be no more remembered: she knew not that the heroes of gallantry were received by the virtuous of her own sex, were courted, acknowledged, accepted, in spite of "broken vows and maids forsaken." Alas! she knew not that the indulgence of custom styled effrontery ease, and vice error. "I am glad you are returned to St. Antholine's, Miss Forrester," said the Marquis of Allingthorn, starting from an appearance of deep thought, as Antonia entered the library. "But, child, you look sorrowful—why this mockery of woe?" pointing to her mourning habit. "Believe me, affliction will come; believe me, to imagine sorrow, and let the self-created worm banquet on our peace, is both presumptuous and sinful." "Yesterday, heaven knows, I witnessed

no imagined scene of woe," replied Antonia: "yesterday I witnessed the deepest affliction—the anguish of the orphaned heart, on the removal of a departed parent to the last sad sanctuary of mortality." "Not the deepest—say not the deepest, Antonia," exclaimed the marquis; "the deepest cannot be felt by the innocent. Last night I stole from the obtrusive gaiety of my visitants, and wandered to the sacred resting-place of your mother: last night, when too dark to distinguish the inscription, I knelt upon the marble slab—I passed whole years in review—I sighed without interruption, for no living being witnessed my agony. My groans awoke not the dead; the very heavens seemed to weep; for the soft dew descended, and mocked, as they fell, the tears of—" "Of what?" importuned Antonia, gazing anxiously upon him. "Of regret—what else?" questioned the marquis,

recovering himself. "Have I not told you your mother was my friend? and the loss of friends too surely awakens regret." "And my father," said Antonia, solemnly, "was your enemy?" "Yes, yes," murmured the marquis—"my soul's enemy." "Dreadful!" ejaculated the horror-struck girl. "Yet, surely, my Lord, so many years must have blunted the edge of sorrow! Time, they say, is a never-failing balm for sublunary woe: surely then it must have restored peace!" "Peace!" he resumed, with a mournful smile—"peace! never, never, never!"

He struck his hand upon his forehead, rose from his chair, and paced the library. Suddenly stopping—"Peace," he exclaimed, "must dwell in a breast where no turbulent passions enter—with the lowly, the innocent, the virtuous. It is a mild guest, a heavenly cherubim, which vice frightens,

which passion dares not claim." "And mercy," said Antonia, in imploring accents, "is the attribute of Heaven. Dreadful, indeed, must be the injury which is beyond the reach of pardon! Oh, my Lord!" and she took his hand, while her's trembled as she held it—"let past enmity be obliterated; let the deeds of my unfortunate father be forgotten; let his memory henceforth rest sacred. Remember, that as we forgive, so are our trespasses forgiven: remember, that revenge, rankling in the human breast, turns to corrosive poison, and embitters the very existence of the being who so fatally woos it. You are pale, you are agitated: if the memory of my mother is dear—if ever her friendship was soothing to your heart, pardon the father of her child!"

The marquis, almost convulsed, gazed stedfastly on her. In a momentary impulse, he threw his arms around

her, pressed her fondly to his bosom, and murmured "Antonia." Suddenly he started back: the glow of tenderness vanished, his features assumed their native melancboly, and with a heavy sigh he exclaimed—"If you knew all, you, even you, would curse him." "Impossible!" she articulated, and her blood grew cold at the suggestion. "Supposing," solemnly resumed the marquis, "he was the murderer of your mother." "All-seeing God!" ejaculated Antonia, "was my mother murdered?" and sunk almost breathless on a chair. "Not absolutely by sword or pistol," he rejoined, "but by the more pungent pangs of the mind. The law called him not a murderer, because no rank spell, no poisonous drug hastened the sleep of death: it was his conduct, Antonia; it was the stamp of villain that destroyed peace, that shortened existence. Her's was a form," and tenderly he gazed on his

weeping auditor, "which would have robbed vengeance of its power—would have changed malice into pity, and hatred into love." "And yet," sobbed the distressed girl, "my misguided, ungrateful father spurned her affection, and trifled with her peace." "No, no; he was not ungrateful," exclaimed the marquis, whose agitation almost amounted to frenzy; "for he doted on her even to madness——" "And killed her," murmured Antonia. "You harrow me," he replied, wildly. "I tell you again, blood marked not the deed. He loved her, Antonia—Heaven knows how much—loved her more than his own soul—loved her to her undoing, and his own dishonour. But go, Miss Forrester; I hear a foot-step in the passage; suspicion is awakened. Go; for should its malevolence reach you, what would I not brave? Go, go——" "And will you not grace our theatre with your presence,

Miss Forrester?" inquired Lord Garberry, as Antonia and Lady Selina prepared to take their evening's ramble.

"Will you not condescend to be the sweet critic of our humble powers?"

"No, my Lord," she coldly replied: "to-night Lady Selina and myself decline all invitations to gaiety." "Cruel determination!" rejoined the earl: "do, for pity's sake, revoke it."

"Feeling forbids," remarked Lady Selina: "I would say delicacy; but your lordship has already convinced us in matters of inclination, *that* may be dispensed with." "Much sooner than your society, my charming censor," resumed the earl: "but, 'pon honour, I merit not your displeasure: temptation assailed me; human nature is fallible; and the scruples of conscience were subdued, by the interference of your fair sister, and her importunate guests. First, they attacked me with intreaties; those failed in the desired

effect: next, they expostulated, but there also were they unsuccessful, and at last positively gained the day by the powers of ridicule." "Amazing temptation!" said Selina, contemptuously. "And so the raillery of a few thoughtless fashionable dames of quality has put to flight the *virtue* of the Earl of Carberry. Do tell me," archly, "what in turn may be required to expel his *errors*?" "Will you take the truant under your guidance, lovely Miss Forrester?" said his lordship, regardless of Lady Selina's inquiry. "Will you banish at once all other society, by permitting him to be the escort of your ramble?" "And," significantly questioned her ladyship, is it to *delicacy* we are to attribute this wonderful change?" "Nay, to whatever source you please," he replied: "only allow me the delightful privilege of attending you, and not the powers of *entreaty*, *expostulation*, and

ridicule, combined, shall induce me to enter the theatre." "And pray," asked Lady Geraldine, who unperceived had stolen behind them, "where are we to find a Sir Charles Easy? Come, come, my Lord, this won't do, believe me," glancing at Antonia: "'tis all loss of time; though you look ever so demure, it won't pass for current coin. Come," drawing her arm through his, "be your own gay agreeable self, and leave these little *simpletons* to their own plebeian notions." "Was ever poor devil so trammelled?" exclaimed Carberry. "Indeed——" struggling to regain his freedom—"Nay, nay, avaunt with these scruples of conscience!" interrupted Lady Geraldine, laughing: "they sit as bad as candour upon a methodist preacher. Come along, come along: nature never moulded you for a moralist; come along, my Lord; resistance won't avail; for if I let you escape me, perish my powers

of attraction!" "By all that's torturing! Lady Geraldine," replied the earl, "the ecstasy of walking with your fair sister, and her lovely friend, cannot be dispensed with." "And by all that's tantalizing!" rejoined her ladyship, "your lordship's performance this night must be enforced. I as the lawgiver lay my embargo; and yonder comes my chief auxiliary to support my authority—Sunderland," calling aloud. "That voice, like a magic spell, transports him hither," exclaimed the beau. "Say, sweet Geraldine, in what can he evince his promptitude?" "Hush! I first will explain," said Carberry. "Supposing your heart the slave of one fair object——" "Oh, natural supposition!" interrupted Sunderland, tenderly directing his eyes to Lady Geraldine. "Supposing," pursued the earl, "that fair object had by a smile consented to your attending her in a ra-

tional, delightful walk——” “Stop, there I put in a caveat,” said Lady Selina: “positively, neither Miss Forrester nor myself would have admitted such an intruder; for of all things the most contemptible and dangerous is the absurd gallantry of a *married man*. Come, Antonia, your countenance indicates an acquiescence in my ideas; let us wish his lordship good night; for in all probability the lark, the herald of the morn, will be the signal for their orgies to dissolve.” “Damned hippancy!” muttered Carberry, while Lady Geraldine and Sunderland burst into a loud laugh. Effrontery for the first time deserted the earl; and, to escape the raillery of his assailants, he made a precipitate retreat. “Propitious moment!” exclaimed Sunderland, seizing the hand of Lady Geraldine. “Say, goddess of my idolatry, when may I claim the blest reward of constancy?” “Lord! Mr. Sunderland,

you are always so very importunate, so very violent, so very disagreeable. I protest——” “What, angelic girl?” interrupting her. “You will make me quite hate you.” “And I protest,” said Sunderland, “that you never looked so provokingly handsome in your life. By all that’s lovely, transcendent Geraldine! when Venus strays from her Idalian groves, she might nominate you her representative.”— “Fie, fie, flatterer! ’pon my honour, affectedly, “you are an arrant foe to humility. Do release me,” apparently struggling to withdraw her hand— • “indeed—indeed—I cannot stay; indeed—indeed—you are quite impertinent, Mr. Sunderland; I will not stay, with well-feigned reluctance, “I will go.” “Cruel creature! languished forth the beau—“annihilation is in your frowns; and to deprive me of this soft white hand,” eagerly kissing it, “would be ten thousand daggers to

my heart. Say, enchantress, when shall I call it mine? when shall anxiety and doubt yield to rapturous certainty?" "Your's, indeed!" with an affected scream—"presumptuous wretch! shocking! shocking!" "Well, but when, beautiful Geraldine?" importuned Sunderland. "When, let me see," raising her finger to her lips—"when—when—when you have learnt to be patient." "Oh, barbarous fiat! Is it in nature to see you and be patient? Say, lovely tyrant, when shall I snatch the golden prize from the negative enthrallment of your supine cousin?" "I don't know," articulated her ladyship; "stop till to-morrow," going, "and then we'll settle it." "To-morrow's a hundred years," impatiently exclaimed Sunderland: "this day, this hour, this very minute, sweet arbitress of my destiny—for no power on earth shall compel me to relinquish this hand, until——" "Yes,

I will," interrupted Lady Geraldine, proudly: "Mr. Sunderland, this trifling is ridiculous; I insist upon my liberty; I will not be dictated to; I will not resign my boasted prerogative of doing as I please. Hope all from my generosity," with returning mildness, "but expect nothing from compulsion." "Go, then," said Sunderland; "exult in the anguish you have inflicted; laugh at the heart you have caused to bleed. But know, relentless maid, the being you reject—" "Nay," said Lady Geraldine, with a look of inviting sweetness, "I did not once mentioned the word *reject*; but you are so impetuous and so wayward, that you absolutely fancy what was never meant." "Merciful declaration! sweet condescension! and you really pardon me—you really retract the petrifying sentence?" "Entirely and eternally," gaily exclaimed her ladyship, extending her hand. "Come, no thanks, no

captures—to-morrow night, in the cloisters, we'll discuss the point more fully, and now for the theatre."

Lady Selina and Antonia, conversing of the Countess of Carberry, Mahala Penrose, the Morelands, and Sir Frederick Stanley, pursued their ramble on the beach, forgetful of the gaieties they had so peremptorily relinquished. The melancholy rippling of the waves, as in gradual swell they rolled towards the shore, cast a pleasing pensiveness o'er their ideas; and the moon, sporting on the liquid mirror, reflected her silver beams on all around. The evening was serene; no discordant sounds broke upon its stillness; no unmeaning jest or loud laugh mocked reflection; a gentle breeze, laden with odours, stolen from the thymy bosom of the hills, invigorated the face of nature, and rendered the atmosphere cool and refreshing. Antonia paused in front of the cavern in which she had once

sought shelter; in which, in an unguarded moment, Dauverne had betrayed his hopeless love. She sighed as memory retraced the scene, and when her companion proposed returning started fearfully at the sound of her voice. "What a coward!" said Lady Selina, smiling; "am I so very tremendous? or did you really fancy you saw some Hydra headed monster rise from the ocean?"

Antonia faintly smiled, and re-took the arm of her friend. As they turned to retrace their steps to St. Antholine's a person quitted the cavern. "Ah!" exclaimed her ladyship, "here is a guard at once." "A guard!" repeated Antonia, "who?" and then next instant her eyes encountered Dauverne. "He does not see us," whispered Selina. "How melancholy he looks—poor Dauverne! I do think something he wishes to conceal presses on his spirits. Antonia, what is the mat-

ter? you are pale—how your hand trembles.” “ Nothing, nothing,” she murmured, for Dauverne had now perceived them.

“ This is an unexpected pleasure,” he exclaimed, as a smile relaxed the features of abstruse thought; “ I little imagined my solitary ramble would have been so agreeably interrupted.”

“ But why are you not at the theatre?” questioned his fair cousin, “ I thought this night your presence could not have been dispensed with.” “ Because,” he replied, mournfully, “ my heart covets not gaiety; that is—*heigh-ho!*” sighing, “ I felt listless and uncomfortable, and therefore took the liberty of retiring. Besides,” with forced spirits, “ in so brilliant a circle my company could not possibly be missed. What say you to prolonging your walk?” drawing a hand through each arm. “ A stroll by moon-light is worth a whole dozen of

midnight assemblies. I would rather take a rural walk, accompanied as I am at this moment, than be at St. James's on a levee day." "Indeed, we believe you," said Lady Selina; "I know, like ourselves, you belong to that class stiled by the Duchess of Delaware *insipids* and *antediluvians*." "May we ever continue to swell its list!" observed Antonia, "for surely reason is preferable to fashion!" "When you have resigned its influence, Miss Forrester," fervently remarked Darnverne, "heaven will have ceased to be merciful, and man to be ungrateful." Antonia bowed, and a transient blush overspread her features. "Pray how long have you learnt to compliment?" questioned Selina. "Truth, my fair cousin," he rejoined, "can never be termed compliment." "But may not compliment sometimes be termed truth?" archly demanded Antonia. "Not in the present case,"

replied Dauverne, and again he breathed a heavy sigh. "I shall be glad when all this bustle and folly is over," said Lady Selina, as they came within sight of St. Antholine's; "when our guests have dispersed and we have again *condescended* to be rational." "Will you?" exclaimed Dauverne, starting, "will you?" "Oh, yes!" replied Selina, not noticing his emotion, "for really now there is neither peace, comfort, or quiet." "And will you be glad, Miss Forrester?" mournfully asked Dauverne. Antonia could not answer. "'To be sure she will,'" rejoined her ladyship, "for to a certainty she likes not the duchess or any of our present circle; and I am sure my poor father will have reason to rejoice, for he is absolutely tormented in his own residence." "True," said Dauverne; "and I——" he paused, "good night!" for they had now reached the vestibule, "good night!"

and he eagerly pressed the hand of Antonia and hurried from them.

"How strange!" observed Lady Selina, as they ascended the staircase—
 "Percival Dauverne is greatly altered; he was always inclined to be thoughtful, but now he is really melancholy. The conduct of Geraldine is reprehensible, but even yet I hope his influence and his virtues may reclaim her. Her apparent preference for that coxcomb Sunderland is too palpable!" "It is indeed," articulated Antonia. "But when they are married," pursued her ladyship, "a husband's tenderness and her own gratitude must surely awaken duty." "Married," mentally sighed Antonia, and her heart shrunk fearfully within her. On reaching her own apartment she felt no longer the necessity of restraint; she mused on the perversity of fate till tears streamed down her cheeks, and sobs swelled her bosom. "Cruel,

cruel destiny!" she murmured, "would that I were at rest! would that I were laid in the still cold grave, by the side of my lamented mother! Never again will those happy hours return, when conversing with my beloved abbess, with sister Benedicta I heeded not the world—when my days glided in sweet improving confidence—when each fleeting moment was marked with the exercise of instruction and the attainment of knowledge—when in every soul religion enforced the practice of virtue, and virtue, in humble adoration, mildly yielded to her mandates. Should I ever return, should I ever seek that sanctuary to the wretched, penance cannot obliterate my crime; for to the sacred altar of my God I carry a reluctant sacrifice, a heart bleeding with its own sorrow—a heart impressed, deeply, deeply impressed with the merit of an earthly object. Oh, Father!" and she raised her clasped hands and eyes to

heaven, "give me strength to witness the last irrevocable ceremony, and then take me to thy bosom an enshrined victim of the veil's seclusion!" If such were the sufferings of Antonia, no less acute were those of Dauverne. He saw the preparations for his marriage, the deeds of settlement, and all the necessary arrangements with sensations bordering on despair—sensations which defy description, and which at times almost threatened to unhinge the firm powers of his mind. The conduct of his affianced bride was no longer a serious object of regret: her dissipation, her extravagance, nay her preference for Sunderland were alike disregarded: he beheld no other than Antonia—he thought of no other than Antonia; awake, asleep, in society or retirement, she alike "possessed every thought, and *throbbed* in every vein." "She knows I love her," he would exclaim. "she has witnessed my tor-

ments; it is evident she pities them, and yet I live a burden to myself. I dare not claim her vows—I dare not say, Antonia, give me your heart, give me the richest jewel this world can boast or I can ever ask. Shall I acknowledge the fatal secret to the marquis?—shall I tell him my soul disclaims the intended alliance?—shall I tell him I love, even to madness love his ward? To live in eternal warfare with one's own passions," he continued, folding his arms and pacing his chamber, "to be compelled to combat yet unable to overcome: and yet my honour! I have promised a dying father to become the husband of Lady Geraldine, and dare I hesitate? No, no, no; though the most wretched, the most unfortunate of human beings, I will not become the most culpable. Even my distracted heart whispers honour, and shall I reject the call? All, all must be sacrificed; Antonia,

in loving you I am hateful to myself. I must behold you no more—I must no longer indulge in interviews so destructive—I must fly the being who turns anguish into transport, who renders even misery delightful. Yes, we must part, *must*, dreadful fiat! my soul feels rived in the anticipation. I will pray for your health, your prosperity, your peace, your comfort, Antonia, but when I am married I *must* see you no more.”

Time will not linger; in misery as in joy it alike rolls on, alike teazes, pleases, perplexes discontented man. A little week alone remained to complete the minority of Lady Geraldine. A grand masquerade was to celebrate the desired epoch, and in three days after she was to become a bride. As soon as the ceremony was performed the new-married pair were to quit St. Antholine's to visit an estate of her ladyship's in the north, and the suc-

ceeding morning her grace the Duchess of Delaware and the whole of their gay visitants were to return to their respective mansions.

"Who's for a dash at lottery?" exclaimed Sunderland, seizing the cards as the evening's diversion closed. "Come, Carberry, I'll bet my Wild-fire against your Bronze on my red ace." "No, no, I bar the bet," said the Duchess of Delaware, "we'll all join." "*Allons donc*," said Lady Geraldine, glancing at the *rouleau* of guineas which lay before her, "who's afraid? Ten on the black trey." "Done," said Sunderland. "Twenty on the king of diamonds," exclaimed Lord Carberry. "Fifty on the queen of hearts," vociferated Westbrook. "Done, done. But what says her grace?" "Lord!" with an affected shrug, "*her grace* is ruined and undone, beggared past all redemption; not a *louis*, and over head and

ears in debt." "Pshaw!" replied Sunderland, "credit like your's is sterling worth. Come, double or quits." The duchess bowed in acquiescence, and in another instant Sunderland vociferated—"By Jupiter! it is mine." "Ditto, ditto," repeated the duchess, and again fortune frowned. "Oh, the blind devil!" exclaimed Bravenger, "to repulse so angelic a votary—'tis clear the gipsy is not to be bribed. Will your grace nominate me your banker? Your drafts shall be duly honoured, and your condescension properly estimated." "I do think I must," she replied, sweetly smiling. "Come, now all my hopes rest on this little, little heart," and she twirled the deuce between her thumb and finger. "There is a heart more to be relied on than that," whispered Bravenger, "a heart so staunch that the utmost malice of fortune could not change it." Again the duchess smiled, and

her eyes with affected diffidence rested on her ivory fingers. " 'Pon my soul!" exclaimed Sunderland, as he turned up the deuce of spades, " your grace is ill luck personified." " I wonder then," said Colonel Arkerman, " mankind should so fearfully shun it!" " Decked in such a form," observed Bravenger, " what heart would fail to hail it?"

Pleased at the compliment, yet provoked at the occasion which had called it forth, the duchess stole a glance at Lord Westbrook; but, regardless of what was passing, he was leaning familiarly on the back of Lady Geraldine's chair, laughing at some remark her ladyship had just been making. Mortified she instantly withdrew her eyes, and turned the whole artillery of her charms upon Bravenger. " Upon my honour," said Lady Geraldine, rising from the table, " your grace has been particularly unfortunate!" " Oh, no-

thing, nothing!" she replied, with feigned indifference; "a mere trifle!" And her snowy bosom heaved a sigh, for at the moment her eyes rested on the *imitation* of a superb brilliant necklace presented by her husband, but which, through the inordinate love for play, had passed from the *delicate* fingers of a duchess into the *vulgar* hands of a pawnbroker. "Heaven and earth, what a night is this!" exclaimed Lord Westbrook, drawing aside the damask window curtains. "For what?" questioned Lady Geraldine. "For an elopement, to be sure," replied the viscount; "not a breeze stirring—the moon mildly shining—four post horses—Cupids for charioteers — and — and — and——" "And who?" demanded the Duchess of Delaware. "Guess." "Not I indeed," scornfully. "Any one then who's young and pretty," pursued Westbrook, "an heiress, a ward, or

a friend's wife. Oh, by all that's mysterious! yonder is a tall figure stalking among the cloisters. Faith, 'tis the midnight hour too!" "Among the cloisters," repeated the marchioness. "There are two as I live," exclaimed Lady Geraldine, peeping over the viscount's shoulder. "'Tis Mr. Dauverne and the Marquis of Allingthorn," remarked the duchess. "Oh! so it is," said the marchioness, who now ventured to steal a glance; "what a strange melancholy fancy to be walking at this time of night." "Nay, perhaps they are studying the abstruse science of astronomy," remarked Lady Geraldine; "I am sure Dauverne is looking up, just as though his eyes were fixed on yon bright planet Venus." "Pardon me," said Sunderland, "in search of Venus he would not have looked so high." "I wonder," resumed her ladyship, tapping Sunderland on the arm with her fan,

"if there really is a world in the moon ! do let us ask Dauverne by what kind of people it is inhabited." "No doubt of it," he replied, "mountains and forests, cities and villages, theatres and parliament houses, kings and queens, nobility and mobility." "Prudes and coquets," interrupted Lord Westbrook, glancing at her Grace of Delaware. "And," retorted the duchess, with a look that could not be misconstrued, "monkeys aping men, and men aping monkeys." The entrance of a servant stopped any further dissension, and the party adjourned to the supper room.

CHAP. V.

“WHAT a pretty dress!” exclaimed Lady Geraldine, examining the brilliant gems necessary to constitute her metamorphosis into chastity’s queen; for her ladyship in the approaching masquerade purposed personating the goddess Diana. “The azure is so pure, and the cestus so dazzling; I declare——

“Th’ adorning thee with so much art
Is but a barb’rous skill;
’Tis like the pois’ning of a dart,
To apt before to kill,”

Interrupted Sunderland, replacing the diamond crescent on the table. “Bless me, how very complimentary!” lisped the Duchess of Delaware. “I

do think," turning to Lord Westbrook, "as the heathen deities are to visit St. Antholine's, I will be—be—what shall I be?" "Venus of course," replied the viscount, "and I Mars." The duchess smiled. "I will be a shepherdess," said the marchioness, entwining a crook with artificial flowers—"I admire such simple characters!" "Translated from the plains of Arcadia," remarked her grace. "But what will Miss Forrester and Lady Selina be?" "It is a subject of so much magnitude," replied Antonia, "that we really have not yet determined." "Besides," said Lady Selina, "we should do nothing rashly, and the pleasure of a mask lies in the disguise." "True, but it is only among ourselves you know," rejoined the duchess; "the world will not learn our characters." "The fair friends mean to surprise us with something new," said Sunderland; "mean to set

us all at defiance, and puzzle the knowing ones. I'll bet a cool hundred they're discovered." "Not by you," said Lady Selina. "And why not?" "Because it may require discernment." Westbrook laughed, while Lady Geraldine exclaimed, "Do be my satellites." "'Pon my honour," said Sunderland, "for two pretty damsels I know no office more desirable! Do sweet Selina, do lovely Antonia, complete the planetary system of matchless Diana." "Satellites," said Dauverne. "Satellites," repeated Sunderland. "Come, Miss Forrester," gaily resumed Lady Geraldine, "you shall be Hyale." "Hyale," said the beau, bowing obsequiously to Antonia. "And you," said her ladyship, addressing her sister, "I nominate Arethusa." "Arethusa," with a second obeisance repeated Sunderland. "And you," exclaimed Lady Selina, archly placing her hand on his

shoulder, "henceforth I nominate *Echo*." "Anything to please the ladies," forcing a laugh. "Upon my word you are very accommodating," remarked the duchess. "But what says Lord Carberry?" "I await the determination of Miss Forrester," answered the earl. "If that's all," resumed the duchess, "I'll settle it at once. I understand you, if Miss Forrester is Hero your lordship will be Leander; or, if Thisbe, in you she may find a Pyramus; or—" "Your grace certainly forgets the earl is already a *Benedict*," observed Dauverne. "Oh! that's no matter," said Lady Selina, drily; "in fashionable life it is not half so binding as a debt of honour." "And pray, Mr. Dauverne, what will you be?" asked the duchess, sarcastically. "Father Time, or bluff old Cerberus, or some scare-crow to pleasure, I warrant," exclaimed Lady Geraldine. "Per-

haps as applicable as *Diana*," retorted Dauverne. "Supposing," said Lady Selina, addressing the Duchess of Delaware, "your grace was to be Penelope; she was a pattern of persevering industry and unabating affection: you remember the ingenious contrivance of the web. Do you think it would agree with the English constitution to break the night's repose for the sole purpose of unravelling the fatiguing labours of the day?" "Really, Lady Selina," petulently, "I am no physician." "By the bye," concluded her ladyship, regardless of the exclamation, "how is my Lord Duke? and has the Marquis of Beddingfield recovered the *measles*?" "Very rational and very quiet," replied the duchess, laughing, "for 'tis three whole days since I have been obliged to invent responses to importunities; and now, actually I am in so *delicate* a state of health that I quite

dread the fatigue of the journey."

"Faith! if you hinted that," said Lord Westbrook, "you'll not be long without him." "Why then," re-

marked Lady Selina, "we shall have a *neglected husband* at the masquerade."

"That will not do, my little cousin," said Dauverne, "for the chief merit of the characters lie in *novelty*."

"Delaware is so ill," observed the duchess, addressing the viscount, and apparently ignorant of the allusion, "that he cannot come: indeed I believe," conceitedly, "it is the only bar to the danger." "'Tis all a

hoax, depend upon it," exclaimed Sunderland, "he thought your grace, sportsman like, would be *in at the death*." "One would suppose you

were in the stable yard," rejoined the half-offended duchess; "really, Mr. Sunderland, you make the world imagine your education was *completed* among groomers." "It is the *finishing*

stroke to many of the very first rank," observed Dauverne. "People unacquainted with the versatility of fashion would be puzzled to distinguish the master from the man, for my *lord* and *coachy* have certainly changed places." "Well," said Lord Garberry, "every one has a right to ride his own *kobby-horse*." "Most undoubtedly," rejoined Dauverne, "and to drive his own hobby-horse if he pleases. Nay, many now think it quite as necessary for a gentleman to turn a hair's breadth corner in style as it was formerly to enter a drawing-room gracefully: 'tis become as perfect a science as *pugilism*; and if the present propositions gain ground we shall by-and-bye have for our *law-givers* and *peace-makers* a race of *Mendoza's*." "Here's a long and obstinate contest in the paper," said Colonel Arkerman, laying aside the Herald; "*royalty* and *nobility* were distinguished in the ring."

“Class all as *mobility* at once,” exclaimed Dauverne, “for surely if a man forgets himself the world cannot be blamed in overlooking him.”

“Why, where’s the harm?” questioned Sunderland; “if men like to fight they have only themselves to thank, ’tis not you or I being present which promotes it. I recollect being on the ground when — what was the fellow’s name? got the day. Don’t you remember, Carberry, how the poor devil staggered?”

“It is one way of arguing certainly,” said Dauverne, contemptuously. “I suppose the *amateurs* are all——”

“Pshaw!” interrupted Sunderland, “there’s no entering the lists with you, your ideas are so *gothic*,”

“And your’s,” retorted Dauverne, “are so *humane*.”

“So you really think,” said the duchess, turning to Westbrook, “there is some collusion in Delaware’s letters?”

“Indeed,” replied the viscount,

“ I think there’s substantial foundation for Sunderland’s suggestion. Who knows, but the old don sighing for his Laura thought to frighten her by a prospect of his latter end.” “ Frighten me !” repeated the duchess, “ nonsense ! how you talk.—Delaware always thought me a woman of courage.” “ Methinks he proved himself a man of *courage* at any rate,” archly observed Lady Selina. “ Ah ! I have discovered the disguise at once,” exclaimed Lord Westbrook, ~~examining~~ a veil Antonia was netting ; “ you think to screen your charms, beneath this envious guise, but know, my sweet nun, that, like the matchless sun, they will shine forth, for beauty when most retiring is most to be adored.” “ Your lordship’s supposition is quite erroneous,” gravely replied Antonia, “ it is too sacred a character, to be burlesqued.” “ Do be sister Catherine,” implored the viscount, “ and I, my

charming recluse, will be Father Francis."

The duchess bit her lips, cast on him a look of displeasure, and exclaimed, "If I was Miss Forrester, you are the very last person in the world I would entrust with the secret."

"Why so barbarous a restriction, incomparable deity of youth, love, and pleasure?" questioned the viscount. "Nay, mighty Mars," petulently drawled out the duchess. "you had better nominate Miss Forrester Venus." "A good proposition of your Grace's," rejoined Westbrook—" 'pon my soul, I know no character so applicable! And yourself——" "Depend upon it,"

haughtily interrupted the duchess, "the powers of definition will alone be enabled to penetrate my disguise."

She stepped from the window upon the lawn, and, resuming her native smile, joined Bravenger, who was just returning from fishing, and without

condescending to cast a single glance towards the viscount, took his arm, and walked to the shrubbery. "Oh, naughty boy! to get into such sad disgrace," said Lady Geraldine, laughing: "can you possibly *exist* under the heavy weight of Laura's displeasure?" "Faith, I am grown quite a philosopher," he replied, with the most perfect *sang froid*—"firm as a rock, cold as ice, except, "whispering in the ear of Antonia, "when *Venus* smiles." Antonia blushed, not at the absurd compliments of Lord Westbrook, but at the notice she excited; for the eyes of Dauverne, who sat apparently perusing a newspaper, were fixed upon her; and Lord Carberry, who till now had been endeavouring to digest the pill *Benedict*, darted on him a look of exultation, on Westbrook a look of envy. "Ah!" resumed Lady Geraldine, with affected gravity—"you are like the rest of the cruel, ungrateful,

treacherous sex, 'ruin first, and then forsake,' singing 'Sure my tender heart will break.' Antonia shuddered: she turned from the *spectre of the corridor*, and looked at Lady Geraldine with scrutinizing earnestness. "Like a true and loyal knight, I prophesy, he returns to his allegiance," exclaimed Sunderland. "Were you always a true prophet?" questioned the viscount. "Not sufficiently infallible to steer his own bark clear of the rocks of *error, folly, and self-conceit*," observed Lady Selina. "Most excellent!" said the mortified beau. "Can your ladyship point out the criterion of *perfectibility*?" "I can," exclaimed Westbrook, bowing to Antonia. "It won't do, my Lord," rejoined Lady Geraldine: "the duchess can play the same cards, believe me: Mr. Bravenger may be quite as convenient as Miss Forrester." "*Convenient!*" repeated Dauverne, warmly—"Miss Forrester

convenient! What can be your ladyship's allusion?" "Lord! Mr. Dauverne, I thought you was poring over the state of the nation, reading the dreadful accidents, or examining the list of births, marriages, and deaths: upon my honour," with marked emphasis, "you make a newspaper *convenient*." "I believe," answered Dauverne, proudly, "it is universally allowed to be so." "And I believe," resumed her ladyship, turning carelessly away, and addressing Sunderland, "after all, that I am of your opinion: I see revenge and jealousy depicted on that countenance," pointing to Westbrook. "The duchess holds him as

"a wanton's bird;
 Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
 Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
 And with a silk thread plucks it back again."

Alas, poor viscount!" "Your insinuations are very improper, Geraldine,"

ramble," she gaily exclaimed: "really," glancing spitefully at Westbrook, "I never thought St. Antholine's half so pleasant." "It was too short," observed Bravenger. "Oh, flatterer!" smiling sweetly in his face. "By heavens, you injure me in the supposition!" he rejoined—"I never flatter, for is it in nature to feel time or distance with so captivating a companion?" Again her Grace stole a glance, to observe the effect of her stratagem; but Westbrook still hung on the back of Antonia's chair, apparently unconscious of her presence. Anger, revenge, jealousy, kindled a war of passions in her fair bosom, and, with the most pointed irony, she exclaimed—"Miss Forrester, are you teaching his lordship how to net?" "Miss Forrester's *net*," retorted Westbrook, "is so invisible, and of so soft a texture, that her captives are ensnared ere they suspect their shackles." "Come, Mr.

Bravenger," said the duchess; endeavouring to conceal her vexation, "will you enter the lists with me at billiards? Lady Geraldine and Mr. Sunderland we'll nominate umpires." "*Allons, allons,*" said Sunderland, starting from his seat—"by Midas a good idea! I'll bet on your Grace's side. Come, Arkerman, Glendenning, Carberry; come, come." And to the billiard-room the party repaired. "What is the object of your scrutiny, Miss Forrester?" inquired the Marquis of Alingthorn, approaching unperceived; for she stood at the window of a small observatory, her eyes turned towards the direction of the silent repository of her mother's sacred dust: she was gazing, not on the spire near which she rested, but on the thick impervious grove which screened it from her sight: she had dived into the lapse of time, and was mentally tracing her sufferings and her woes—she heard him not.

“ Miss Forrester,” he again repeated. She turned hastily round, her eyes surcharged with tears, and her features impressed with the corroding gloom of melancholy. “ Why, my lovely ward,” he pursued, “ when every heart is exhilarated with the promised gaieties of to-morrow’s masquerade, do I find you thus dejected? why thus solitary? why thus in tears?”

Antonia pointed from the window, and her lips articulated “ Mother.” The marquis breathed a heavy sigh—he paused—he struggled with his feelings, and then solemnly rejoined—“ that tale even by me must be forgotten; you mistake me, Antonia,” reading doubt and uneasiness in her countenance, “ not for ever—I dare not hope for ever; but for a little season; for sadness and care must not cloud the festivities of marriage. You tremble, you turn pale: is it,” and he gazed inquisitively on her—“ is it a mother

who awakens this emotion? Fear not to trust me, Antonia—I swear to make you happy: I love you,” and he threw his arm around her waist, “heaven knows how much!” She shrunk from him; she turned towards the window; she hid her burning cheeks upon her bosom; while the marquis, unmindful of her agitation, continued—“If the wary, if the experienced are ensnared, how can the unsuspecting, the innocent heart be guarded? If o’er those schooled in the busy world love asserts his power, surely in the breast of the guileless novice, his dominion must be absolute.” “My Lord,” faintly murmured the tortured girl. “Hear me when I vow,” resumed the marquis, almost convulsed with the internal conflicts of his soul,’ by the angel spirit once inhabiting the mortal form of the departed Antonia, to guide her orphan through the perils of the world—to guard her, to protect her with the

same care, the same tenderness, evinced to Geraldine and Selina. Speak, then; say, what can make you happy? Name the being who has stolen into your confidence—who possesses your unadulterated heart—who tinctures your imagination with melancholy—who clouds your days with care.”

Still was Antonia silent: her purity spurned at disguise, spurned at the mean subterfuge of falsehood; yet could she not say—“ I have imbibed a passion destructive to my peace; I have suffered it to gain ground, until it has subverted my every prospect of happiness; I love Mr. Dauverne, the affianced husband of your daughter.” Ah, no! rather would she have died, rather would she have experienced the severest pangs of misery; for modesty, virtue, innocence, shuddered at the suggestion. “ Antonia,” again importuned the marquis, “ throw aside disguise: with the open unhesitating con-

fidence of friendship, tell me who has robbed you of a heart?" "My heart," repeated Antonia, and her tremulous lips and heaving bosom refuted the assertion, "rests in the convent of St. Eustacia, in the society of the lady abbess, in the friendship of Sister Benedicta. May I, my Lord," and she gained courage by the propriety of the request, "claim your permission to return to Italy, to re-enter for ever the asylum of my infancy?" "Am I to credit what I hear?" exclaimed the astonished marquis. "Am I to believe; that a being, young, lovely, formed for the ornament and enjoyment of society, would willingly relinquish that society, for the sole purpose of retiring to the gloom and austere severities of a monastery? No, no, Antonia, I cannot believe it; I am no stranger to human nature; 'tis disappointed hope, newly-awakened resentment, or misplaced affection, which instigates

this request. Again you blush, again you tremble. Say then, acknowledge the secret. I have a claim upon your confidence—no common claim, believe me—a claim which warrants the inquiry, which demands the relation." He paused—he gazed intently on her. "What, still silent? Ah, God!" suddenly starting, as though a new idea flashed across his brain, "is it as I dread? Has the poisonous breath of flattery blasted peace? Say, unhappy girl, have you madly, rashly, yielded your love to the husband of another?" "Oh, no!" sobbed Antonia, and her burning cheek faded to the hue of death—"your suspicions wrong me; I am not so fallen, not so wretched." "Hapless daughter of an injured mother!" pursued the marquis, almost frenzied at the suggestion, "cannot the warning voice of affection dissolve the charm? Cannot example, keen and deadly, subvert it? He shall go;

the viper shall be removed—alas, too late!” sinking, pale and convulsed, upon a chair—“for he has stung the soul’s quiet of *Antonia’s* orphan—of *Antonia’s* last, sad, memorable legacy.” “What mean you, my Lord? What viper?” implored the weeping girl. “Can you ask? can you indeed plead ignorance?” he replied. “That face, Miss Forrester, agrees not with hypocrisy; again the conscious tide flushes it. Ah, heavenly father!” raising his clasped hands—“I had hoped, I had vainly flattered myself, the mind as the body were alike faultless—were alike the counterparts of once-existing perfection. *Antonia*, must I, to affirm my fatal discovery, name——” “Who—who, my Lord?” grasping his arm, and almost breathless. “The Earl of Carberry.”

Antonia started—horror-struck, yet relieved; for her secret was still sacred—was still unguessed. “The

Earl of Carberry!" she at length repeated, while the indignant fire of offended virtue animated her features—"the husband of the injured, suffering Cecilia—the pursuer of folly—the votary of fashion. My principles," she continued, proudly, "you have yet to learn; for heaven can witness, that if there is a being upon earth whom my soul despises, it is the Earl of Carberry." Quick was the transition from despair to joy, from sorrow to thankfulness, in the countenance of the marquis. He took her hand—he fervently pressed it. "Antonia," he said, "you have snatched me from a sea of trouble, from a gulf of misery. The threatened trial is past, the award of sin deferred; your candour is unequivocal, your veracity unquestionable. Pardon the doubts I have dared to form, the suspicions I have dared to hint: affection must plead my excuse; for affection, impartial, strong, uncontrollable affec-

tion was the instigator. Yet, as your guardian, may I ask from whence springs the wish of a return to Italy? From whence arises this strange desire of seclusion, this unnatural distaste for the world? Has my family received you with disrespect, or treated you with indifference? Have I ever acted inconsistent with the bond of friendship, or the impulse of regard? Has England——” “Never, never,” interrupted Antonia; “my heart acknowledges your tenderness, beats with sisterly affection for Lady Selina, with gratitude—with almost filial emotion, for her father.” “Then why this wish to leave us?” questioned the marquis. Antonia raised his hand to her lips, and sighed. “Inexplicable; mysterious girl!” he continued: “even now,” forcing a smile, “methinks there exists some hidden motive.” “My mother was happy until she quitted St. Eustacia,” faltered Antonia: “misery

marked her sojournment in the world, and her daughter trembles." "Her sufferings," solemnly replied the marquis, "originated in the susceptibility of the heart—'twas there that the wound rankled." "Is love then the only source which destroys a relish for society?" timidly asked Antonia. "I am but a novice in the world, yet already have I traced passions more destructive—passions, breaking down the bounds of reason, and implanting remorse and anguish." "Ah! what is your allusion?" wildly asked the marquis; "what would you infer? Whom would you impeach? Rash girl, beware: it is beyond the reach of mere suspicion; there must be conviction ere you can gain belief---*remorse* and *anguish*---surely, surely, you must know——" "What, my lord?" "Nothing, nothing," he replied, recovering himself, and struggling to regain composure. "And

you wish to leave England---you wish to return to Italy? Remember, when there it is too late to repine. Be not hasty in your decision. Think of it, Miss Forrester; take a month to consider; and if then you sigh for St. Eustacia, though painful to my own feelings, though inimical to my hopes, your wishes shall be commands."

Antonia raised her eyes to thank him, but he was gone: she threw herself upon a seat, folded her hands upon her bosom, thought of Dauverne, and wept. "In a little week," she mentally sighed, "he will be the husband of another: in a little week, virtue will require him to be banished from my thoughts for ever: this sacrifice completed, this one sacrifice completed, and all will be well: doubt and anxiety will have ceased; each hour in his absence I shall acquire fresh fortitude---I shall bow to the fiat of destiny---I shall remember the duty I

owe to myself---I shall be-----" happy, she would have concluded, but a shuddering sensation succeeding checked the impulse. "I shall be resigned. Oh, may the senseless Geraldine awaken to his virtues! Oh, may she-----" "Venus, by all that's lucky," exclaimed Lord Westbrook, throwing open the door of the observatory, "in the elevation her bright excellence demands; for she may now," glancing at an assembled group upon the lawn, "look down upon her lesser mortals. But why are those bright suns dimmed with the envious drops of sadness? Why are the roses of those cheeks moist with Olympian dew? Has Cupid played truant with his beautiful mother, or does she weep because there remain no hearts to captivate?"

Antonia withdrew her hand and rose from her seat. "I am come, sweet goddess," pursued the viscount,

“to implore your clemency; substituted ambassador by the chaste Diana, in the room of Mercury, now winging his flight to the regions of pleasure, to supplicate one night’s loan of Promethean fire; greeting her sister deity, with the presumptuous wish for her to descend, and amid the bowers of St. Antholine graciously superintend the preparations for to-morrow’s festivity.”

“Does Lady Geraldine require my presence?” inquired Antonia, vainly endeavouring to suppress a smile.

“With Endymion, wearing in this world the guise of the honourable Thomas Sunderland,” resumed Westbrook, “in the temple dedicated to Thalia, on the north side of the cloisters, does she await to hail thee.”

“Bless me! Miss Forrester, where do you hide yourself?” exclaimed Lady Geraldine, meeting her on the lawn. “If I was to pass as many minutes in solitude as you do hours I

should absolutely be vapoured to death." " 'Tis astonishing indeed !" said Sunderland. " I detest solitude," yawning, " and as for a misanthrope, of all things under heaven 'tis my aversion." " That is accounted for without much study," observed Lady Selina ; " boasting time-killers are always afraid of reflection : but remember what Voltaire puts in the mouth of the old gentleman—

" I boast of nothing—yet, when I've a mind,
I think I can be even with mankind !"

" Nay, the time-killer and the time-sparer fare alike," said Sunderland ; " the insatiate monster pays no respect to persons." " True," rejoined Lady Selina, " but the man of pleasure and the fastidious beau he handles the most rough." " Don't talk of that foe of beauty, that death-bed of pleasure," affectedly lisped the Duchess of Delaware, " for, 'pon my honour, the very

anticipation of wrinkles frightens me almost to annihilation." "Ah! but they *will* come," replied Lady Selina, "in spite of seas of cosmetics, paints, patches, and white-washes." "May not the ravages of the enemy be protracted though?" asked Lord Carberry. "Doubtless many imagine so," rejoined Selina, "or we should not so frequently see *sixty* aping sixteen; but to behold infantine gaiety mimicked by *infants* in their second stage is the most ludicrous and contemptible of all ludicrous and contemptible things." "Lord!" exclaimed her grace, "would you have a woman, like a time-piece, always proclaiming her *date*? Really, one would suppose your ladyship had been born and educated at *Annamaboe*, your ideas are so trite." "No," said Lady Selina, "but I would have them with experience glean wisdom, and not engraft folly on the withering trunk of

age." "We shall see when you reach that grand climacteric," resumed the duchess, "whether you retain the same ideas." "Probably not," replied her ladyship; "ere that period your grace may have ceased to see." "Oh dreadful!" screaming, "what lose my eyes?" "Yes, brilliant as they are Time will have them, for though they were diamonds yet would he not take a bribe." "Could the lustre of human orbits distance the tyrant," exclaimed Lord Westbrook, "safety would dwell in the present circle." A siren smile mantled the delicate features of her grace, and turning languidly to Lady Selina, "do in mercy banish the hateful subject," she articulated; "really it quite unnerves my system." "And apparently it has had the same effect upon Mr. Sunderland," remarked Lady Selina, "for an animated trunk is all that remains to favour this matchless

we all possess curiosity," lisped the duchess; "and Miss Forrester's countenance indicates something more than common." "Ask me the day after to-morrow," said Lady Geraldine, smiling significantly to Sunderland, "and the secret shall no longer be withheld."

The following evening the persevering ingenuity of art transformed St. Antholine's into an Arcadian Paradise: the weather was extremely favourable; the breeze gently waved the trees, and the darkness of night increased the splendid appearance of the illuminations. The whole of the shrubbery and gardens were hung with coloured lamps. Upon the green slope sweeping to the ocean was erected a temporary rotunda, the interior of which was lined with painted transparencies; and in the centre, in a kind of orchestra, was stationed a military band. From the ceiling, apparently composed of

intertwining flowers, six magnificent cut-diamond lustres were suspended; and around the apartment, in every direction, were bell lights, interspersed with baskets of fragrant exotics. The cloisters and side wings of the building were also superbly illuminated: the columns were entwined with variegated lamps, forming various devices emblematical of the occasion, for Lady Geraldine that day attained her one and twentieth year.

The suit of apartments on the ground-floor were beautifully decorated; and the stair-case and corridor leading to the principal drawing-rooms, fitted up for dancing, adorned with shrubs, vases, and artificial flowers. A brilliant star, composed of variegated lamps, suspended over the entrance to the ball-room. Its walls were lined with pink silk; the roof of sky blue; the whole entwined with wreaths of flowers; while at the top and bottom

were two costly mirrors, reflecting and re-reflecting every passing object. The floor painted in water colours displayed great taste; in the centre were the marquis's arms; each corner represented dancing figures, trophies, and various other devices; the whole surrounded by a rich Egyptian and Persian border.

The masks began to arrive about ten o'clock, and by half past eleven the whole of the motly group had assembled. Antonia felt terrified: it was a spectacle she never before had witnessed: she shrunk from the commonplace questions which were addressed to her; and notwithstanding the soothing whispers of Justice, the disguise worn by her friend Selina, would willingly have retreated to her own apartment.

"Avast heaving there, my little pirate," exclaimed a tar, "for by St. George and the dragon, I'll take thee

in tow, in spite of squall or shower !”

Antonia turned hastily away, when a tall stately figure stalked towards her, and thrice profoundly bowing : “ Fear not, most peerless princes,” said the knight of the rueful countenance, sinking on his knee ; “ lay thy ivory hand upon my shoulder, as a signal that my services are accepted, and, by the adamantine chains of love, I will face a united legion of spirits of darkness !”

“ Spirits of the devil,” vociferated the sailor. “ I’m for all fair, and above board, no sculking, true heart of oak ; grapple us together, and may I be keel-haled if I thrash not your *donship*.” “ *Sanca Panca*,” exclaimed the knight, in accents of solemnity, “ buckle on my shield, prepare my gauntlet, and bring hither Rosinante ; for too long have I parlied with the enchanter.” “ *Enchanter* !” repeated the sailor : “ split me on a rock if I awaken you not from your *enchant-*

ment." "Man of war, avaunt!" said a disciple of simplicity; "thy boast is vain, base, and irreligious: by loud words and angry accents, measure not thy courage; for know, that shallow streams produceth most noise, hollow blocks most sound. And for thee, maiden, put thy trust in one who will lead thee in safety whither thou would'st go."

But Antonia awaited not to be led; she had already made her escape, and mingled with the surrounding crowd—a crowd which consisted of harlequins and columbines—Jews and Infidels—ballad singers and soothsayers—gipsies and hay-makers—nuns and friars—fine ladies and coxcombs—Savoyards and figure dancers—a Valentine and an Orson—Mother Goose and Nobody—an astrologer and a sultan—a school-master and a linguist—Time and Fancy—a rhyming bell-man and a mad poet—an apothecary and Death

—a learned lady and an alderman—
 Falstaff and a philosopher—an abbot
 and an abbess—a methodist preacher
 and a mock saint—a taylor and a shoe-
 black—a chimney sweeper and a
 gamester—a widow bewitched and a
 bachelor bewigged—a scaramouch and
 an Indian chief—a fox-hunter and
 a starved squire—a hoyden and a go-
 verness—Pan and a Cyclop—a vaunting
 hero and a dumb senator—a vapoured
 belle and a quack doctor—a *beauty* of
 the old school and a *nude* of the
 present—a Catherine and a Petruchio
 —the aforesaid group of heathen
 deities—dominos and *negative* mem-
 bers—a lawyer and the Devil—and
 there was, gentle reader, as the sub-
 joined chapter will disclose, the—
Devil to pay.

CHAP. VI.

“ Hail, mighty truth!” said a philosopher, addressing the timid Antonia; for in that character, at the instigation of Lady Selina, had she ventured to appear. “ Unvarnished goddess, hail! I have sought thee in the courts of princes, in the cabinets of council, in the midnight vigils of the great, in the languid assemblage of voluptuaries; but thou wert fled, and in thy stead, flattery, folly, and credulity reigned.” “ My garb is the garb of simplicity,” replied Truth, “ and shuns the parade of ostentation.” “ Where erectest thou thy throne?” questioned the philosopher. “ To-night at St. Antholine’s, to-morrow and this circle will see me no more;

for fashion has usurped my sovereignty, and expelled me her frequent haunts." "The system of the world is altogether changed," rejoined her sage companion: "once, philosophy consisted in the powers of reasoning, the rationality of science, and the unabating strength of fortitude; now, it is a vain and mistaken vehicle for false principles, false maxims, and dangerous insinuations." "Of which school art thou a follower?" questioned Truth. "My habit," replied the philosopher, "will solve the query. The foundation of the newly-formed system is sacrilege, anarchy, and confusion—its vesture blood. But see, Time approaches; his scythe spares not philosophy, and all alike he sweeps in a wild chaos."

In a moment they were surrounded. Tragedy was distinguished by her cypress wreaths, and mourning robes. Comedy carried her mask. Satire's

transparent covering betrayed the dagger she would have concealed :—and envy's snakes rolled horrible. Justice seized the hand of Truth, and led her to her throne of audience. A whole crowd of complainants pressed forward, and brandishing her scales the goddess bowed. " I," said Time, throwing down his hour-glass and resting on his scythe, " am abused, condemned, and trifled with. Some accuse me of protraction ; others censure my velocity ; some call me an enemy ; others shudder when I am named : and even those who complain of the shortness of existence, wish away days, months, and years, because they say I intervene between the possession of fancied bliss, rest, or independence. To thee, oh judge of equity ! I come for restitution ; say, under what form am I to expect succour ?" " In the form of industry," replied justice, " win her for thy friend ; banish from society

intemperance, and sloth, and Time no more shall need a champion." "I," said a strange caparisoned figure, "am a frequent visitor in most families, though never greeted with a smile. If an unlucky urchin upsets a china vase or breaks a mirror, poor I must bear the accusation.—If the gardener, for an offering of love, steals the ripe fruit from the walls of his master, again the opprobrium rests on me.—If my lady's favourite lap-dog squalls, if the squirrel is neglected, or the parrot's cage left open, then am I again found guilty; for Nobody, Nobody, Nobody, answers all." "Go," answered the deity; "for know, that while Falsehood stalks the earth, Justice is circumscribed."

Hymen, entwined with roses bearing a flaming torch, approached: "Numerous are my injuries!" exclaimed the new complainant: "time has been when my bond was the bond of love,

confidence, and honour—when my rites were holy and my precincts sacred. But now I am abused, for interest is the sordid motives of parties, and persons, like the conveyances of estates, are the mere vehicles for possession. Pin money, settlements, terms formerly unknown, are the items on one side; whilst on the other, the heiress passes with her riches, rather than her riches passing with her. Vexation arises, indifference and neglect succeeds; and, in a little time, their names swell the records of Doctors Commons.”

“Avarice has steeled the virgin heart,” said Justice, “and dissipation, exhausting the finances of the other sex, points to Hymen as the *forlorn hope*.”

* Finding no chance of redress, the deity withdrew. Venus, attended by her loves and graces, approached, saw the assemblage, and retreated. Diana for a moment paused, gave her bow

to Endymion, and proceeded. A loud uproar was heard, for a strange trio pressed forward ; Justice arose from her throne and withdrew—it was a doctor, a lawyer, and the devil. Truth, ashamed to be seen in such society, followed the footsteps of her companion ; and left them on earth to the practices of *their* iniquity. In every quarter the sound of gaiety reigned : ballad singers warbled, harlequins capered, Valentine conquered, Orson roared ; and each individual gave life to his respective character.

Time pursued the footsteps of Truth ; if she paused he was at her side, and defended her carefully from all intruders. He talked of the listlessness of pleasure, and carried her thoughts beyond the motley group among whom she mingled : she smiled on her unknown guardian, and implicitly yielded to his guidance. Once his voice assumed its native tone—it

was familiar ; she looked eagerly towards him, he grasped her hand, and she felt his tremble ; instantly he recollected himself—instantly the garb of fiction was resumed, and still was Antonia doubtful. On entering the rotundo, the crowd was so great that she missed her protector ; and, as she looked anxiously around in hopes of distinguishing her companion Justice, an astrologer approached and took her hand. “ Fair Truth, listen and believe the oracle,” he exclaimed, “ for I have cast the horoscope of your nativity ; and read that the difficulties inimical to love will pass away, like night’s vapours at the approach of morning, leaving the prospects cloudless as *your own* Italian sky.” Antonia started. “ The face of the Heavens have revealed to my scrutiny the secret conflicts of your soul,” he continued, “ the internal struggles of virtue, and the obduracy of love.—

The goddess of chastity pities the apparent waywardness of fortune; and the shepherd Endymion outstrips *Time*." "Your studies, oh son of erudition! have misled you," faltered Antonia. "My knowledge is the knowledge of experience," resumed the astrologer; "palmistry may deceive, but the planets cannot. Come, and I will explain the signs——"

"All hands hoay!" shouted a voice, and again the sailor was at her side. "So you thought to give me the go by, my tight one; but shiver my timbers if I cannot sail with the swiftest cutter." Antonia shrunk abashed; and clung to the arm of the astrologer for protection. "Again beset by a sea monster, incomparable princess," said the knight of La Mancha, approaching in solemn state; "impair not that transcendent beauty, by sighs, tears, and ineffectual struggles; for, by thy unrivalled charms,

and my all-conquering prowess, I will rescue you from the enchantment of the tyrant!" "Tyrant, forsooth!" repeated the tar. "Come, come, Don Devil, you forget you are in *England* and not in *Spain*." "Say, beautiful Dulcinea, shall I storm the castle, sever the iron bars, and set the captive free?" "I care not," exclaimed Antonia, scarce knowing what she said; "let me but find the marquis, Lady Selina, or any one I know, and then you may do as you please." "Ah! what my fair weathered smack," resumed the sailor, "you think to ply your oars amain, to veer away; but split my mizen if I don't make you bring to." "Antonia, do not be alarmed," whispered the astrologer, "remember it is all *en mascarade*." "If I can but make my escape," articulated Antonia, "never again as long as I live will I mingle in such an assembly." "I believe you, Miss Forrester,"

whispered the astrologer. " Ah !" said Antonia, starting, " who are you ?" " No matter," he replied, " I know and will protect you." " And so you surrender, you strike colours do you ?" pursued the tar, perceiving her terror. " Come cheer up then, for d—e if ever a *British* sailor triumphed over the oppressed :—

" 'Tis'nt the jacket nor trowsers blue,
 " The song or the grog so cheerly,
 " That shew us the heart of a seaman true,
 " Or tell us his manners sincerely."

The easy vivacity of grace, and the masterly touches of a fine sonorous voice, occasioned a general silence; and when the song was concluded, and the sailor nimbly darted through the crowd, the buzz of admiration rose into loud and rapturous plaudits. A mad poet hovered around the deity of beauty, uttering, with the greatest facility, the most incoherent nonsense :

“ Now for the cypress and the willow to weave a chaplet for my brow,” he exclaimed ; “ the bosom of my mistress is white as the snow upon the Alpine hills, and, oh ! as cold. I have been to Olympus, but my goddess frowned.” “ Go to the *Priory* ; duty calls thee hence,” interrupted the astrologer ; “ and by the offices of love rob the orphaned heart of its sorrow.” “ Why, who the devil are you ?” muttered the poet, and again relapsed into his absurd rhapsodies. “ I am called Fancy,” said the wearer of a party-coloured robe ; “ in me mankind may view the friend of modern genius, the criterion of taste, and the stamp of fashion. Though versatile and changeable as the camelion, yet to me does beauty owe her influence ; for what pleases me in one, provokes me in another, and absolutely disgusts me in a third.” “ Would that to-morrow were arrived !” said

a domino, approaching and taking the hand of Antonia. "Why do I find you here?" he continued, "strange girl! not to enter with avidity into this species of *fashionable amusement*." "Ah, no, my lord!" replied Antonia, who instantly recognized the Marquis of Allingthorn; "for the honour of my sex, I hope there are but few who voluntarily court the disguise of a mask, as a sanction to admit the impertinent freedoms which day-light cannot warrant."

"Had the Duchess of Delaware heard that speech, it would have excited her raillery," said the marquis. "Sooner would I contend with the raillery of the whole world," fervently replied Antonia, "than encounter the whispers of self-reproof." "Sweet girl! lovely emblem of a beautified mother!" resumed the marquis. "You, like me, are disgusted with noise and folly. Time has been when such an

assemblage would have yielded me pleasure; when with the gay I could have sported, could have sustained my character, and laughed at the vain efforts at discovery. But now I am changed, I am become grave and gloomy; as a pestilence I would fly the voice of pleasure; and, but for my family, renounce all intercourse with society. Oh, Antonia!—" At this moment the mad poet was passing, heard the name, started, gazed steadfastly on her and fled. Neither marked his manner. A party of hay-makers approached, by their flippantry drew the marquis into conversation, and again Antonia found herself alone. "Fear not," exclaimed Time, for she started at the appearance of Death driving whole herds before him. "The monster paused: "Kings pay me homage," he said, "empires dwindle before me, nations sink beneath my feet." "But Truth fears thee not,"

timidly faltered Antonia. "And justice," exclaimed her representative, extending high her sword, "is immortal." The crowd passed away: Justice was summoned to a different part of the assembly; and Time still retained his station by the side of Truth. "You are fatigued, you are weary of the monotony of the scene," he said: "the buzz of freedom, the whispers of flattery, and the insipidity of adulation, yield you not pleasure; for, unlike the vain and giddy votaries of fashion, your soul would seek amusement in innocence, enjoyment in rationality." "No, no," replied Antonia, with forced gaiety, "agreed, that I am devoid of taste, but believe me I merit not such encomiums." "Oh, yes!" rejoined Time, "though none more clearly sees your merit, though none more sensibly feels, shall I say more woefully rue it? yet had I a thousand tongues, and every tongue

proclaimed your excellence, could I not do you justice. I speak not from report, or the casual glance of rapture excited by your exterior charms, but from the internal worth of your heart, that inestimable jewel, which deepest wounds when most it would evince mercy." "Who can it be?" thought Antonia, as doubtfully she gazed upon her companion. "That heart," he continued, "which pities the weakness it cannot fail to censure; which acknowledges no influence but virtue, no—" "Hush! hush!" interrupted Antonia, "and know, strange mysterious being, that Truth despises flattery." "Time never flatters," rejoined the mask, resuming his cast of character; "no, he whispers strange truths in the ear of beauty; checks the ardour of adoration, disperses whole herds of sycophants, and stamps his petrifying mark on the most polished,

most transcendent features. 'Tis a heart like your's which defies his powers; for the innate excellence of the mind will last when beauty fades and youth shall be no more. Happy is the being who will cherish the winter of your days!—who will see rising from the wreck of every exterior charm the blossoms of virtue, piety, and innocence. Sweet delineator of your own matchless excellence—”

It was the voice of Dauverne—Antonia started, trembled; she wished to go yet more she wished to stay; she remembered the scene when for shelter she sought the cavern, and stood irresolute.

“The garb of fiction cannot conceal you,” he continued, “in vain I fly—in vain I struggle—in vain I reason—in vain I would subdue: even in absence fancy presents the only object it will ever form; fancy wanders back to the precious treacherous moments passed at the vicarage, when fatally secure,

I courted danger, I dreamt not of misery—when like a beautiful vision bursting on my sight, I beheld you first caressing the little Rosa. Your sentiments, your ideas, your feelings, your every word, your every action, all, all, conspired against my slender prospects of peace, and confirmed me the slave of sorrow. Tell me how to act; deign but to advise.—” “Advise,” faintly repeated Antonia, while her trembling lips almost refused articulation. “Oh, if I saw you spurn me, detest me,” rejoined Dauverne, “I could bear it; but your pity, your—pardon me, Miss Forrester, your tenderness; was I not what I am, you—” “Oh, no!” interrupted the ingenuous unconscious girl, “was you any other than what you are, my—” she paused, she remembered what she had said and shuddered. “Speak on, sweet compassionating Antonia,” said Dauverne, forgetful of Lady Geraldine, and his intended marriage—

"talk ever thus. Oh thrilling ecstasy! transporting pleasure! to know myself beloved; to know the being my soul so madly dotes on, sees, pities, and returns my passion; no wish, no thought, no hope untinged by you swells my bosom; and yet, even at this moment, worth whole years of negative enjoyment, even at this happy, happy moment, I feel a fear, a damp, a tremour, for which in vain I would account." "If I can, select the sensation," replied Antonia, withdrawing her hand and recovering her firmness; "tis the struggles of expiring honour, mourning, trembling, lost her heretofore impervious votary should resign her dictates. Remember Lady Geraldine; remember your pledged word, and forget Antonia." "Forget Antonia," repeated Darrverne, striking his clenched hand against his forehead, "never, never; memory, nay, life itself will yield to the im-

pression." "Be calm, Mr. Dauverne," tremblingly resumed Antonia, "and listen to me. I have betrayed sentiments which I meant ever to conceal—I have infringed the prescribed rules of my sex; yet even now I would change, I would implore you to take example by a weak inexperienced girl; to obliterate what is past, to return to the calls of duty, to renounce love for honour." "How easy to reason! how easy to talk!" exclaimed Dauverne. "Ah, Miss Forrester! if you really loved, if you really felt as I do, could you thus coolly have started the suggestion?" "Think as you please," said Antonia, reproachfully; "delicacy shudders at the outrage she has received. I go, Mr. Dauverne, nay, do not follow me; 'tis best that we shun each other." "No, no, you must not," impetuously snatching her hand: "I cannot bear your displeasure:—stay and calm the perturb-

ed passions of my soul, sooth me into peace, reason me into compliance:—let your firmer resolution guide me; tell me how to merit your esteem, how to preserve your friendship?” “By following the dictates of your own conscience,” articulated Antonia, while her faltering heart throbbed at the stern necessity. “Remember the guide of your youth; remember the counsels of Dr. Moreland; forfeit not his regard; let not the virtues of a whole life be tarnished by one act of dishonour.” “He, even he, has fanned the flame,” interrupted Dauverne; “he has pictured your perfections, he has dwelt on your praise; and when he has ceased the panegyric, I have sought your society and found it realized.

“My heart harboured not one plea against the sweet delusion; it thought not of love until the arrow rankled at its core.” “Sad, fatal in-

interview!" sighed Antonia; "yet soon
 will they be no more repeated—soon
 removed, far, far, from each other,
 memory will alone retrace the transi-
 ent hours: you will then think of me
 as of a sister you have lost—you will
 bless the resolution that recalled you
 to duty, that sanctified virtue and gra-
 titude. And I, for then with holy
 zeal I shall have dedicated my life to
 the service of my creator, have pro-
 mised my heart, in the solemn offices
 of religion, to forswear its errors, to
 renounce its weakness." "Will not
 one sacrifice compensate for involun-
 tary error?" questioned Dauverne.
 "Must it be followed by your re-
 moval from society, by your renunci-
 ation of all its claims, of all its
 charms? Must youth and loveliness
 seek peace in such a sanctuary? Oh,
 beware, Miss Forrester! for heaven's
 sake beware! lest disappointment
 should lurk beneath the veil, and turn

your days to sadness." "There, I do not fear it," sighed Antonia; "there, it is ever the same, serene, still, and peaceful; for if the ecstasy of pleasure, the rapture of joy is excluded, the pangs of sorrow, the agony of woe, gains not admittance." "Your heart was not formed for the supine monotony of seclusion," rejoined Dauverne; "Nature stamped it to receive and administer pleasure; to be to some blest being the sweet antidote to affliction, the sole sum of earthly comfort—never must it wear away in midnight rites, and joyless solitude." "Think not to change my resolution," said Antonia: "ere I quitted my convent I was happy—I have visited the world but have not found peace—I will return to the cherished haunts of my infancy, secure in the assurance of reaping content." "You quit England then?" "Yes." "You return to Italy?"

"Yes," said *St. Erasmus*.—"Yes."
 "You become a nun?"—"No," answered the astrologer, who unperturbed had approached.

Diavolo started: *Antonia* trembled, and for the first time felt grateful for the security of a mask. "Truth must not quit society," continued the astrologer, "for the world would mourn, and *Time* himself would droop. I am come to forbid the sacrifice—to proclaim through the mysteries of my science, that the difficulties arising from the dictates of honour are no more—that the bonds of restraint are broken—that the tyranny of a compulsitory vow is annulled—that the gloom of sadness and disappointment vanishes—that *Time*, sweet goddess, will bring thee peace, not in Italy, but in England—not by the vow of celibacy, but by gratitude, by love, by affection. Nay, go not away," for *Antonia*, confused and agitated,

sought to escape, "listen and believe :—Diana, superior to subterfuge, seeks not disguise : the news will spread, it will reach the Grange, the Vicarage, and the excellent Dr. Moreland will rejoice in the happy union of his pupil and his favourite—his once wished-for niece." "Dr. Moreland !" repeated the astonished Antonia. "For heaven's sake, explain !" implored Dauverne ; but the astrologer was gone—he perceived him in distance, and anxious to learn more, eagerly pursued him.

Antonia not knowing what to think, passed slowly on ; one moment her heart was elated with hope, the next cast down with fear : she sought to penetrate the disguise of the astrologer ; but he had mocked her every effort, and still was she involved in doubt. It was clear he knew her—it was clear he knew the fatal weakness of her heart ; perhaps it was too

palpable to escape even the casual glance of a stranger; perhaps Lady Geraldine, perhaps the Duchess of Delaware, saw and derided her folly: she felt her cheeks glow at the possibility; but, alas, poor Antonia! the measure of her mortification was not yet heaped up—she was destined to receive one which aimed at her pride, her dignity, her innocence. “I come, the messenger of Justice in search of her sister Truth,” exclaimed an Indian warrior, advancing and bowing submissively; “to tell her that her presence is required in the cloisters, and to offer myself a guard to protect her thither.” “Truth requires no protector,” she replied, “her own unvarnished plainness is a shield, even against the shafts of the malevolent.” “Pardon me,” rejoined the warrior, “in these degenerate days, Truth herself needs defence, for the artificers

of the wicked prevail in defiance of her mild mandates." "Justice, you say awaits me," she replied, moving forward; "let us proceed," and soon the loud buz of voices were left behind.

They passed through the illuminated shrubbery; admired the several beauties, the effect of the coloured lamps, the amazing blaze reflected from the rotundo, and soon reached the extremity of the cloisters. Antonia felt disappointed; she looked in vain for Justice; a deep stillness reigned around, and no living being could she distinguish. "Good heavens! why have you brought me hither?" she inquired. "Surely if Lady Selina had expected she would have awaited me," "Be not displeased, sweet goddess," replied the chief: "when beauty is the prize what will not love perform?" "Love," repeated Antonia, haughtily, "you have mistaken the object;

I know you not; and claim no other office from a stranger than my return to liberty." "Say not a stranger," resumed the warrior—it was the voice of Lord Carberry: Antonia uttered an exclamation of amazement and fear. He tore off his mask and dashed it on the ground. "A stranger could not feel these racks, these tortures," he continued; "no, no, Miss Forrester, a stranger could not do justice to your matchless charms, could not appreciate the blessing of this interview." She shuddered; horror and detestation pervaded her heart; yet did she struggle to conceal her terrors beneath an appearance of unbending pride, and fearless indifference. "What can your lordship possibly mean?" she inquired. "Surely, the farce of detention has already been performed too unsuccessfully to warrant a repetition!" "By heavens! you wrong

me," replied the earl; "'tis no farce—'tis the last effort of despair." "Go on, my lord," she said, contemptuously, "say all that you intend; for what to the meanness of subterfuge you are indebted I judge will not be generously resigned." "This high disdain, too haughty girl," rejoined Carberry, "this contempt is more than man can bear—is more than distracted passion can admit: too well you know your power!—too well you know my love! 'tis a mortal flame that consumes me. Long have I anticipated the rapture of this moment: I thought disguise could not have screened you from me: I pictured no other Venus, and, with mistaken folly, hovered around a stranger, who insidiously fanned the flame. She led me on to hope, and then laughed at me; left me to rue my own credulity and time lost."

Instantly he had poet Lord Car-
 rier kneeling her for the object of
 his admiration. And hovered around
 the goddess of beauty, and poured the
 words of passion in her ear: and in-
 stant of woman's weakness, and disdain,
 and then her soft tender, and for-
 getting. "Al! how impossible is it
 to have affection," exclaimed the
 astonished man, as he led her, with
 well-begotten reluctance, to the less fre-
 quented walks of the shrubbery.

Instantly Antonio the Argus eyes
 of eve will penetrate through all dis-
 guise.

Disappointed, for his companion pre-
 served a determined silence, he kissed
 her passive hand. "Antonio, divine
 angelic girl! why diminish the rap-
 ture of this moment? Speak to your
 grateful Carberry—" A start of sur-
 prise and a momentary struggle for
 recovery was the only response. "Wha

still obdurate?" he continued—"in those speaking features I will read my doom then. Off, envious mask, hide not the face of Venus," and he raised his hand to tear it aside. Again the goddess started, and endeavoured to guard her face; but the earl clasping his arm around her waist seized her hand, and forcibly displaced it. Instantly he released his prisoner. "Defeated by heaven!" he ejaculated; while the Duchess of Delaware, for it was no other, burst into a violent fit of laughter, and pointing to him, as in angry haste he paced the shrubbery, whined out—"Alas, poor poet!" He fled to escape her raillery, and paused at the moment the Marquis of Allingthorn betrayed Truth to be Antonia. Immediately he changed his habit, and to the aid of artifice was indebted for the present interview. "Antonia," pursued the earl, sinking on his knee

and kissing her reluctant hand, "loveliest adored Antonia! how can I express my gratitude to fate for this auspicious conference? Long have I sought what you cold and relentless have denied; but now the precious moments must not be lost:—say then most idolized, most worshipped of women, take mercy for your guide; what may a love like mine, ardent, unchangeable, and subduing every barrier hope?—what may it expect?" "Contempt and detestation," haughtily replied Antonia. "Unhand me, my lord, for know that I despise the object as much as I do the profession." "Beautiful even in anger!" rejoined Carberry, for Antonia, almost breathless with heat and terror, had thrown aside her mask. "Oh, that those eyes glowing with resentment would turn melting on me with love!—that that bosom, heaving with cold and

frigid indifference, might palpitate with the flame which rages, which consumes mine ! Antonia, I will forego my rank, my country, my expectations ; I will fly from every haunt, from every tie to call you mine ; in kinder regions you shall be my wife, and thus self-secured what can there be to fear ? ” “ The wrath of offended heaven,” she solemnly replied, “ the reproaches of never-slumbering conscience, the remorse of the heart, and——”

“ Grant me but your’s,” interrupted the impetuous Carberry, “ and for the rest I’ll compromise.” “ Impious, profane man ! ” murmured the horror-struck girl.

“ Too well has your scheme succeeded, yet think not to subjugate my principles of virtue. Had I a father,” and a burning tear stole from her eye, “ had I a brother you would not *dare* to use me thus.—Again I demand my liberty ; nay, detain me

longer and my shrieks shall alarm the family. By what right is this power assumed?" "By the right of love," replied the earl, "which arrogates its empire and tears down all before it. Antonia, mark me, we'll go where the world's cold prudence cannot reach us; independence, grandeur, and my eternal adoration shall be your's." "And the countess, the once equally adored Cecilia?" said the mortified indignant girl. "Damn her!" muttered Carberry. Antonia started. "Dauverne," he continued, grasping her robe, for again did she attempt to escape, "though unmarried, shackled, would not thus plead in vain." "Mr. Dauverne would scorn the meanness, as much as I do the insinuation," she replied, as the blush of wounded pride, of offended modesty crimsoned her cheeks.

"No, no," resumed the impas-

sioned Carberry, "Dauverne is human nature, like me he idolizes, but unlike me is pitied." "Go, my lord," exclaimed Antonia, in accents of dignified severity, "even beneath my scorn you sink; and, for your *safety*, know yourself indebted to my *fears*." "My *safety*," he repeated, "hell and fury! my *safety*."

Now indeed did Antonia tremble, for the earl, who it was evident had offered plentiful libations at the shrine of Bacchus, appeared unconscious of what he did. She shrieked, she struggled; and, as he rudely clasped his arm around her waist, the astrologer rushed through the cloisters. "Save me! save me!" she implored, clinging half fainting to a pillar. "Miss Forrester! Lord Carberry!" exclaimed the astrologer, in accents of amazement.

"And who the devil are you?"

questioned the earl. "One," fiercely, "who in a *prince* would check unmanly violence and spurn him as a *blot* to honour. Fear not, Miss Forrester! you are safe; Lord Carberry dares not harm you: nay, look not so threatening, my lord, I repeat *dares not*; for the man who because he can take advantage of a defenceless female is a coward and a scoundrel. If you require a further explanation seek it here."

"Require," repeated the enraged Carberry, "by heavens! I demand one."

"Come on, then," said the astrologer.

Antonia paused no longer; fear lent her strength, and with the rapidity of lightning she fled from the cloister. She saw the Marquis of Allingthorn, Justice, Time, and a whole crowd of different characters—she rushed among

hem, and grasping the arm of her guardian articulated—"Haste! fly! the cloisters—Lord Carberry—the astrologer." "Gracious heaven! you are pale, you tremble," exclaimed Time, thrown off his guard. "Miss Forrester, Antonia, suffer me to support you." "What has happened?" questioned every mouth, while the marquis, taking her hand and affectionately pressing it, said—"You are terrified, my dear girl, recollect yourself, you are safe; explain what this unusual agitation would imply?" "Go, go," wildly answered Antonia, "hasten to the cloisters and prevent murder."

Instantly the marquis, Dauverne, and several gentlemen repaired thither; but neither Lord Carberry or the astrologer were to be found. The alarm became general; they returned to the shrubbery; and as they paused to consult what plan was most advisa-

ble to pursue the report of pistols sounded from the park. A fearful silence ensued. The ladies, save Antonia and Lady Selina, some through affected sensibility, some through fear, and others because they would follow the steps of the elegant duchess of this, or the fascinating countess of that, fled to St. Antholine's. Antonia grasped the hand of her friend, and, scarce knowing what she did, impelled her forward. "Haste! haste!" she entreated; murder echoed in her ear; images of horror racked her brain, and she felt as though her feeble strength could prevent it. "Let us reach the spot and avert their fury. Ah, God! if either should fall," and her heart seemed to sicken at the suggestion. "What can we do?" said the sympathizing Selina. "Let us return—believe me, my dear girl, our presence cannot administer relief or disarm ven-

geance. Come, your spirits are agitated, and perhaps your fears magnify the danger." " Oh, no, no!" replied Antonia, proceeding, " I heard the instruments of death, and suspense is torture—if through me a life should be sacrificed, never, never, never," and tears streamed down her pale cheeks, " shall I partake of peace. Hush! I heard a groan," pausing at the extremity of the shrubbery: " how these lights, these emblems of gaiety mock my feelings! Ah, again! how hollow! how deadly! here has indeed been murder." " It is only fancy," murmured Lady Selina, who would willingly have discredited the evidence of her senses; " or perhaps the wind; or perhaps the melancholy plaint of the night-bird, frightened, at this lone hour, from her resting place." " No, no," rejoined the nearly frantic girl, " 'twas

a human voice ; perhaps the last struggle of departing nature. Oh, horror ! horror !” for at that moment the astrologer, or rather Sir Frederic Stanley, pale, bleeding, staggered towards them.

Lady Selina uttered a shriek of anguish, and sunk fainting on the grass ; while Antonia, endowed in this moment of exigence with fresh strength, courage, and fortitude, rushed forward to support her brave defender. “ Help ! help !” she loudly called, as Sir Frederic, nearly exhausted, rested on her shoulder. “ Oh, fearful sight !” she continued—“ you are wounded, you bleed !” for still did the warm stream ooze from his arm. “ A mere trifle—a little faintness—no more,” said Sir Frederic : “ now I am better,” recovering himself, “ waste not a thought on me ; I fear for Carberry. Fly, Miss Forrester ; for my unfortunate

antagonist requires immediate succour."

Antonia dared not ask, lest her apprehensions should be realized; she looked the image of despair, as she pointed to her senseless friend. "Merciful heaven! Lady Selina!" exclaimed the baronet—"sweet girl! her strength has yielded to her feelings. I will support her," and he attempted to raise her, but weakness mocked the effort; she fell from his arms; a death-like faintness succeeded, and he threw himself powerless by her side.

Antonia, horror-struck, hung over them; her senses seemed benumbed by the torpor of despair; she knew not how to act: speechless and aghast, she tore her light robe to wrap around the wound of Sir Frederic. He saw her solicitude—he pitied her agitation; but he thought alone of the earl. "For heaven's sake, fly, Miss Forres-

er!" he feebly articulated—"procure assistance, or Carberry dies." The sound of approaching voices was as the dawn of hope in the soul of the dejected: again Antonia loudly called: an answer was returned, and the next moment the marquis, Dauverne, and several others, were in sight. Astonishment and sorrow pervaded the features of Dauverne, at the sight of his wounded friend: the marquis flew to his senseless daughter; and the remainder, directed by Sir Frederic, sought the fatal spot which had witnessed the rencontre. Antonia chafed the cold temples of her friend, and the marquis wept as he supported her.

"My child! my child!" he articulated, kissing her pale cheek, and pressing her with distracted vehemence to his bosom. Lady Selina revived: she opened her eyes—she fixed them

on the marquis : the recollection of the past scene recurred to memory, and, in imploring accents, she articulated—
 “ Oh, my father, save Sir Frederic Stanley ! ”

The marquis started : Sir Frederic, enraptured, scarce believing what he had heard, snatched her hand. She saw him : a crimson blush suffused her countenance ; and bashful, timid, trembling, she hid her burning cheek on the bosom of Antonia.

Lord Carberry was conveyed, senseless, to St. Antholine's. An eminent surgeon attended from Bristol ; and, though not mortal, the wound was considered dangerous.

Sir Frederic's was comparatively slight : the ball was easily extracted ; but, from loss of blood and extreme weakness, danger threatened a removal. He thought not of himself—he thought alone of the earl ; and the

alarming situation to which he had reduced him was the only bar to his happiness, in the certainty of Lady Selina's affection. He had ever esteemed, he had once almost loved the fair cousin of his friend; but the superior charms of Antonia had changed in a moment the train of his ideas, and seized his versatile heart. His passion was not returned: Antonia regarded him as a friend, but rejected him as a husband. He generously withdrew his pretensions; and time and dissipation, for his mind was not formed for unsocial solitude, reasoned him into submission. Again he saw Lady Selina: gratitude strengthened the bent of former inclination, and again he felt himself conquered.

The gaities of the evening were closed—the mirth and revelry of the gala suspended: confusion reigned in the place of pleasure, and the disap-

pointed guests departed. The marchioness loudly regretted this *rencontre*, condemned the consequences of passion, and in her heart wished it had been deferred till the morrow. The Duchess of Delaware ridiculed what she termed the affected prudery of Antonia, indiscriminately censured the combatants, because they had rung the knell of pleasure, and alike pouted, scolded, and complained. Westbrook was disconcerted, thought it *ungentlemanly* to have spoilt *sport*, and echoed every murmur which issued from the rosy lips of the angry Venus. Bravenger felt not for the suspension, but for the occasion: in vain he attempted to sooth the incensed beauty: for once the powers of flattery failed; for her Grace, unaccustomed to control, baffled all his arguments, smiled not upon his efforts, and at length effectually silenced him, by petulently saying, "Provoking

wretches ! I'd rather they had been killed to-morrow than wounded to-day !” “ Wicked creature !” exclaimed the marchioness. “ I protest I would not have said so for the whole world.” “ The sin is in the thought, not the words,” lisped the duchess : “ you know, my dear marchioness, we are all apt to speak rashly : I declare,” with affected compassion, “ excepting to see, I would do all in thy weak power to serve them : but that, Heaven knows, would be too great a shock for my feelings !” “ Hem !” loudly interrupted Lord Westbrook. “ Lord, man ! how you startle one,” drawled out her Grace ; “ one would suppose your lungs were as strong as an elephant’s. Do, for mercy sake, be more considerate ; I declare you’ve quite unnerved me.” “ Well, but what says Lady Geraldine ?” inquires my reader.—“ what says the fair mistress

of the revel? She no doubt would have condemned, had she been a witness; no doubt would have pouted, had she been present." True, I reply; but there lies a secret which in the uproar had not been discovered. "A secret!" repeats the curious—"bless me! what can it be?" None other, gentle lady, than an elopement. The state of the case was, that this *chaste* assemblage had long since lost its goddess; for Diana and Endymion were missing.

END OF VOL. III.

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